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THE HEBREW OR JEWISH, AND CHRISTIAN CHURCH THE SAME;
ILLUSTRATED AND APPLIED,

IN PROOF OF THE DUTY

OF

INFANT-BAPTISM;

AND THE MOST WEIGHTY AND PLAUSIBLE
OBJECTIONS ANSWERED :

IN

THREE SERMONS.

BY GILES H. COWLES, A. M.
PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN BRISTOL, (CON.)

Published at the Request of the Hearers.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN

APPENDIX.

ON THE

MODE OF BAPTISM.

BY JONATHAN VULLER, A. M.
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—NEWARK—

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THE substance of these discourses was delivered in two Sermons.—But as they have been considerably enlarged, they are now divided into three.

- I. Contains the illustration, and arguments in proof of the doctrine, that the Jewish and Christian Churches are the same.
- II. Answers the objection against this doctrine.
- III. Applies the subject in Proof of the duty of Infant-Baptism and answers objections against this practice.

S E R M O N I.

ROMANS xi. 17, 18, 19, and 23.

And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being an olive tree wert grafted in among them, and with them partakeſt of the root and fatneſs of the olive-tree; boaſt not againſt the branches: But if thou boaſt, thou beareſt not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt ſay then, The branches were broken off, that I may be grafted in. Well, becauſe of unbelief they were broken off, and thou ſtandeſt by faith.

THE olive is a very beautiful and uſeful tree, yielding oil, which, by the inhabitants of the eaſtern countries, was much uſed in food, and in ſupplying their lamps. Olive yards therefore were much cultivated in the land of Canaan. Olive leaves or boughs alſo were conſidered as emblems of peace among the ancients. God therefore repreſents his church or people as an olive-tree. Thus, ſpeaking of the Hebrew church, Jer. xi. 16, he ſays, "For the Lord called thy name, a green olive-tree, fair and of goodly fruit." Again, Hoſea xiv. 6, he ſays of Iſrael, "His branches ſhall ſpread and his beauty ſhall be as the olive-tree." God's church or people may with great propriety be likened to a fair, fruitful olive-tree; becauſe when they act in character, and bring forth the fruits of religion, they are beautiful in the view of all holy beings, and ſeek the "things that make for peace," as the olive is an emblem of peace—and becauſe they are uſeful by their pious, exemplary lives, and ſhine as lights in the world; as the olive by its oil ſupplies mankind with light.

When therefore the apoſtle here ſpeaks of the olive-tree, from which the Jews were broken off by unbelief, and into which the believing Gentiles were grafted by faith; he evidently muſt have reference to the Jewiſh church, which was thus called an olive-tree, "fair and of goodly fruit." The Jewiſh church then is here repreſented by an olive-tree, ſpringing from Abraham or Chriſt as the root. The bran

ches are the members, and those which were broken off, denote the unbelieving Jews; who were cut off from their visible standing in this church because of their unbelief, or rejection of Christ and his gospel. The wild olive-tree represents the Gentiles; who when they believed, were grafted into this good olive-tree among the branches which remained, and with them partook of the root and fatness of the olive-tree, or of the special blessings, privileges, and promises, pertaining to the Jewish church. Since therefore the believing Gentiles are grafted into the same olive-tree or church, from which the unbelieving Jews were broken off; it is manifest, that the Jewish and Christian church are essentially the same; or in other words, that the Christian church is but the continuance and extension of the Jewish. To illustrate, prove, and apply this sentiment, will be the object of the ensuing discourses.

In doing this it is proposed;

I. To illustrate and prove the doctrine, that the Jewish and Christian church are essentially the same.

II. To answer objections against the doctrine.

III. To make application of the subject to proof of the duty of Infant Baptism.

I. It is proposed to illustrate and prove the doctrine, that the Jewish and Christian church are essentially the same.—The term church is sometimes used to signify all, who are or ever shall be renewed and saved; including all the “spirits of just men made perfect” in heaven, and all real Christians on earth. This is Christ’s spiritual house, built up of living stones, and is what is termed the universal, invisible church. All of every age, country, and denomination, who have been renewed by the Holy Spirit, and none but such, are members of this invisible church.

The word church is also used to denote all in every part of the world who profess and appear to be the people of God. This is what is called the universal visible church; and it includes all who are professedly or apparently in covenant with God. In this sense, the Israelites, under the ancient dispensation, were his visible church. Accordingly it is said, Acts vii. 38, that Moses “was in the church in the wilderness.” And professing Christians constitute God’s visible church under the present dispensation. All particular churches, of every country and denomination, who, as to essentials, are established, according to the constitution and rules of God’s word, are but parts of Christ’s great visible church.

or family here on earth ; however they may differ in rites, modes, or things not fundamental.

When therefore it is said that the Christian and Jewish church are essentially the same ; the meaning is, that the Jews were required to profess, and actually did profess, to be the real people of God ; or in other words they professed essentially the same religion—the same love and obedience, which the members of Christ's church now do. Those of them who were really what they professed to be, were as much entitled to salvation, as sincere professors now are. The Jews continued to be the visible church or professing people of God, and some of them were so in reality, until the coming and death of the Saviour. Then those, who rejected his gospel, were broken off from their visible standing in that church because of their unbelief. But those Jews, who, like the apostles and others, professed cordially to receive the Messiah, still continued to be God's visible church. And the believing Gentiles were grafted in among them into the old olive-tree or Jewish church ; and so both Jews and Gentiles were united in one body, called the Christian church. All the difference therefore between God's church, under the ancient and Christian dispensation, consists in external rites, forms, and modes of instruction, arising wholly from the different circumstances, in which they were placed. God saw fit, before the coming of Christ, to reveal but obscurely those divine truths, which related to the atonement and mediation of the Saviour, and to other important doctrines of religion ; and to instruct his church in these truths by types and emblems, which shadowed forth "good things to come." But since the coming and death of Christ, these truths are now more clearly revealed ; and therefore those rites and institutions, which typified these, are abolished ; and other ordinances, more easy and simple, are introduced in their stead. To suppose then that God's church under the ancient dispensation was essentially different from what it is under the Christian, because it had less light, and was more obscurely instructed in divine truth, is as unreasonable, as it would be to suppose, that the man is not the same person he was when a child ; because he then had less knowledge, and was governed and instructed in a very different manner, from what he now is. The Jewish church, according to the apostle's representation, Gal. iv. was like a child under tutors and governors, and the Christian like a son and heir at adult age. This shows, that the Christian church is essential-

ly the same as the Jewish, being the continuation of the same church under a different dispensation, or under different modes and circumstances; just as the son, when at adult age, is the same person, he was when a minor, but only is in a different situation.

Further, the Hebrew church was the same as the Christian, in this sense, that it was the church of Christ. It was Christ, or the second person of the Trinity, who from time to time appeared to Abraham as the Lord his God, and made that covenant with him, which was the foundation of the Hebrew church. Christ was also the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who appeared to Moses in the bush, brought the Israelites out of Egypt, made the covenant with them at Mount Sinai, and manifested himself in the tabernacle. For David, in Psalm lxxviii. 18, speaking of the God who went before his people in the wilderness, says "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive," &c. And the apostle Eph. iv. 3, expressly applies this to Christ; which plainly shows that he was the Lord God of Abraham & of the Hebrew church-- that he was the angel of "the church in the wilderness." Acts vii. 38. The Hebrew church therefore was the church of Christ, as much as the Christian church now is; and in this respect they are the same, as they stand in the same relation to the Mediator, he being the head of both. Consequently speaking or thinking lightly of the Hebrew church is evidently despising the church of Christ.

Having made some observations to illustrate the doctrine, that the Hebrew and Christian churches are the same; it is proposed to produce some more direct arguments in proof of this sentiment.

1. It may be conclusively argued from the consideration, that they are both founded on the covenant of grace. As many appear to have wrong or confused ideas of this covenant, it may be necessary briefly to state and explain it. The proper meaning of the term covenant is an agreement between parties on certain conditions; or it is some conditional proposal made by one party to another. And an assent to this proposal by the other party is ratifying the covenant. Grace is the exercise of mercy or goodness towards the unworthy or ill-deserving.

By the covenant of grace then is meant God's offering his favour or eternal life to unworthy sinners, through Christ, upon condition of repentance and faith. The condition on man's part is a faith, which will express itself in cordial love

and obedience. And the promise on God's part to those, who comply with this condition, is his favor and life eternal. Whenever therefore a person exercises love and faith towards God, he cordially assents to the covenant of grace, or enters into it; and all who profess real religion do professedly assent to this covenant, and are visibly in it. It is important, that we distinguish between this covenant of grace and the covenant of redemption, which many confusedly blend together. "The covenant of redemption subsists between the three persons in the sacred Trinity, containing their proposals and engagements, respecting the redemption and salvation of fallen man." God the Father proposes and promises, to God the Son, that, if he will undertake the work of redemption, he shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. The Son undertakes, and the Holy Ghost acquiesces, and engages to assist in carrying this plan into execution by renewing the hearts of those, who are given to Christ. The covenant of redemption then subsists between the three persons in the Trinity, and was eternal. But the covenant of grace as has been shown is between God and fallen man; and none are brought into this covenant, until they do in some way assent to its conditions, which are repentance, faith, and love.

This covenant of grace was revealed in some degree to Adam, Enoch, Noah, and the other pious patriarchs, who lived before Abraham; and it was by a cordial compliance with its terms, that they obtained salvation. It was more fully revealed to Abraham in that covenant, which God made with him, and of which circumcision was the seal or token. For a little attention to the subject will plainly evince, that the Abrahamic covenant, which was the foundation of the Hebrew church, was in substance the covenant of grace. When God designed, in a more public manner than before, to constitute a visible church, he called Abraham out from his native country and the idolatrous world. And after Abraham by complying with the divine directions, had manifested his faith and obedience, God proposed publicly to enter into a covenant with him, promised him peculiar favors on certain conditions, and appointed a visible token or seal of ratification. Abraham assented to the conditions, applied the token according to the direction, and thus visibly entered into covenant with God. Now if it can be shown, that this covenant required faith or real religion, as its condition, and promised God's favor or eternal life to a compliance with this condition; it

will be undeniably evident, that it was essentially the covenant of grace.

That faith or real religion was the condition of the Abrahamic covenant, is manifest from various considerations. It is manifest from the very face of the covenant, recorded Gen. xvii. — God says to Abraham, verſe 1 and 2, “ I am the Almighty God ; walk before me and be thou perfect [or upright and ſincere, as the word often means] ; And I will make my covenant between me and thee.” Now it is evident from this account, that the condition of this covenant, required on Abraham’s part, was to “ walk before God and be perfect” or upright ; and this certainly implies real religion. Are there any Chriſtians, who now do more than this, which was required of Abraham as the condition of this covenant ? If not, it is evident, that real religion was the condition of the Abrahamic covenant.

Further it is manifest from what the apostle ſays of circumciſion, that this covenant was the covenant of grace. It is certain, that circumciſion was the token or ſeal of the covenant God made with Abraham. “ Ye ſhall circumciſe the fleſh of your foreſkin, and it ſhall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.” Gen. xvii. 10. But the apoſtle declares, Rom. iv. 11, that Abraham “ received the ſign of circumciſion, a ſeal of the righteousneſs of the faith, which he had yet being uncircumciſed.” Here it may be obſerved, that by the phraſe “ righteousneſs of faith” in ſcripture is meant juſtification by faith in Chriſt.

Circumciſion, being called “ a ſeal of the righteousneſs of the faith,” &c. ſhows, that it was a ſeal or token on God’s part, that he would pardon and juſtify Abraham, and all other true believers on account of this faith. But this is the very ſame thing, propoſed in the covenant of grace, which is, that God will juſtify all, who cordially believe in the Saviour. Since therefore circumciſion, the token of the Abrahamic covenant, was “ a ſeal of the righteousneſs of the faith” or a token, that the faith of believers ſhould be counted unto them for righteousneſs or juſtification ; it is certain, that this was the covenant of grace.

Further, ſince the circumciſion, which Abraham received, is ſaid to be “ a ſeal of the righteousneſs of the faith *which he had*,” &c. it ſhows, that it was a token of faith on his part, as well as a token on God’s part, that thoſe who had this faith ſhould be juſtified. Let if this covenant, of which circumciſion was the token or ſeal, did not require faith ; how

could his circumcising himself and household in compliance with its requirement be any seal or manifestation of his faith? For his receiving or applying the token of the covenant could not be a seal or manifestation of any thing more than the covenant required. If therefore, faith was not the condition of this covenant; then Abraham's receiving the sign of it could be no seal or token of his faith. But since the apostle calls his circumcision, "a seal of the faith which he had," &c. it is certain, that faith was the condition of the Abrahamic covenant. Accordingly it is said verse 13, "For the promise [which was made to Abraham in this covenant] that he should be the heir of the world, [or the father of many nations or of all the believing world] was not to Abraham, or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. And the faith here spoken of by the apostle, and of which circumcision was a seal, was that faith, which was accounted unto Abraham for righteousness, and made him the father of "all them that believe." Is it not therefore abundantly manifest, that saving or justifying faith was the condition of the Abrahamic covenant?

This is further evident from the consideration, that *unbelief* debarred persons from the blessings, promised in this covenant. One of these promised blessings, was the land of Canaan. But the apostle speaking of the Israelites, "whose carcases fell in the wilderness" says, They could not enter into the land of promise "because of unbelief."

If therefore, they could not obtain the blessings, promised in this covenant because of unbelief, it is manifest, that faith was the condition of the covenant; otherwise, how could unbelief cut off from its blessings? This truth is also evident from the words of the apostle Rom. xi. 20. The Abrahamic covenant all allow was the foundation of the Jewish church. But the apostle there declares that the Jews were broken off from this church or olive-tree "because of unbelief;" which proves incontrovertibly, that faith was the condition of the covenant, on which that church was founded. Since therefore, the condition of the Abrahamic covenant was faith or real religion, it must be essentially the covenant of grace.

This is still further evident from what is promised in this covenant. For among other favors God promises Abraham, "to be a God unto him, and to his seed after him." Gen. xvii. 7. In this covenant then God promises to give himself; and is there any thing greater promised to believers in

the covenant of grace? "It is remarkable, that the same phraseology is preserved in the new Testament, where the "blessings of the covenant of grace are expressed." Thus the principal promise in what is called the "new covenant," Heb. viii. 10. is, "I will be unto them a God, and they shall be to me a people." "And all the blessedness and glory, "which will finally be conferred on believers in heaven is "thus expressed. "He that overcometh shall inherit all "things; and *I will be his God.*" Yea, God cannot promise real Christians any thing greater or more desirable than *Himself*, or that he will be their God. As therefore God, in the Abrahamic covenant, promised to give *Himself*, which is the greatest of all spiritual blessings, and the same that is promised to believers in the new Testament; and as the condition of this covenant was faith or real religion; it is evident beyond all rational contradiction, that it was a dispensation of the covenant of grace.

Accordingly the apostle speaking of the promise made to Abraham, expressly declares, Rom. iv. 16. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace." In Gal. iii. 14. he also speaks of the blessings of Abraham coming on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. But if the blessings promised to Abraham in the covenant which God made with him, are the same, which now come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; then this covenant must be the covenant of grace.

Again, Gal. iii. 29. it is said, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Here it may be observed, that it was by this covenant, of which circumcision was the seal, that Abraham was constituted the father of many nations, or of them that believe.— For the apostle expressly declares, that he received this, "seal of the righteousness of faith, that he might be the father of all them that believe." It is therefore by this covenant, that believers become the seed of Abraham, and heirs according to the promise. But if this covenant was not the covenant of grace, and did not promise spiritual blessings; how could it constitute believers Abraham's seed, and heirs of the blessings which it promised. For all Gentile believers certainly do not inherit the land of Canaan and other temporal blessings here promised to Abraham. They cannot then in any sense be the heirs of the promise of this covenant, unless it promised spiritual blessings.

Since therefore, Christians become Abraham's seed by this covenant, and are heirs of its blessings according to the pro-

nise, that God would be a God unto him, and to his seed ; it is manifest that this was essentially the same covenant of grace, in which all Christians are now interested. All who were professedly in this covenant, were professedly in the covenant of grace. Is it not strange, that any, who attentively consider the subject, can, in direct opposition to all these plain proofs from the holy scriptures, deny, as many do, that the Abrahamic covenant was the covenant of grace, and promised spiritual blessings ? As therefore, the Abrahamic covenant, on which the Hebrew church was founded, was the covenant of grace, and as all allow, that the covenant of grace is the foundation of the Christian church ; it is manifest, that they are essentially the same.

2. Another argument in proof of this doctrine is, that the same qualifications were required for membership in the Hebrew, as are now required in the Christian church. That right affections of heart towards God, or faith and a holy obedience, are the qualifications, which God now requires for membership in the Christian church, is generally allowed. And that these were required in the members of the Hebrew church, is certain from the scriptures. Thus when the church was first set up or organised in the person and family of Abraham ; the qualification required of him was, to " walk before God, and be perfect " or upright, which, as before shewn, implies real religion. And his circumcising himself and family, was a visible token or profession of his faith and obedience. Now if God required faith or real religion, as the condition of this covenant, which he made with Abraham, as the father of the Hebrew church, and on which this church was founded ; then it is certain, that this same condition or qualification was required of all, who entered into this covenant, and became members of this church. For God said to Abraham, " Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations," which shews, that the covenant was the same, in its conditions or requirements, both to Abraham, and to all his posterity, who entered into it in their succeeding generations.

Further, circumcision was the known, standing token of the Abrahamic covenant, which has been shewn to be the covenant of grace. The token of a covenant is something, which denotes an assent to it, and is a ratification of it. When therefore any person applied this *known, standing* token of God's covenant to himself or children, he did by this transaction profess or engage to comply with its conditions ;

as much as a person now does, when he bows his assent to the words of a covenant. As therefore, all the members of the Hebrew church were acquired to apply this token of the covenant to their children; it is manifest, that they were required to exercise that saving or justifying faith, of which circumcision was the token. For certainly God did not require them to apply this token in a hypocritical manner. These considerations plainly evince that true faith was required by God as the condition of the Abrahamic covenant, and of an approved standing in the ancient church. Accordingly the apostle declares, that the Jews were broken off from that church by unbelief, and that believing Gentiles were grafted in, and stood by faith; which shews beyond all reasonable dispute that faith was required as a term of an approved standing in the Jewish, as well as in the Christian church; and that therefore the qualifications of membership were the same in both churches.

Again, God made a covenant with the Hebrew church or people at Mount Sinai, in which he promised peculiar blessings on certain conditions. To this they professedly gave their assent, and thus entered into covenant with God. And this covenant was the constitution of the Jewish church until the death of Christ. If therefore, it can be shewn, that the condition of this covenant, was real religion and holiness of heart; it will be manifest, that this was the qualification of church membership—or was required of, and professed by the members of the Jewish church.

When God had brought them out of Egypt to Mount Sinai, he said unto them, *Exod. xix, 5*, “Now therefore if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then shall ye be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people.”—This shews, that the condition on their part was to obey his voice and keep his covenant. God then proceeded in the *xx.—xxiii.* chapters to declare to them the commands and statutes, which constituted the covenant that they were to keep. Among these were the ten commandments or moral law. And the sum of these as explained by our Saviour, is to love God with all the heart, soul and mind, and our neighbours as ourselves. As therefore this covenant, included the ten commandments or moral law, which requires us to love God with all the heart and our neighbour as ourselves, it certainly required real religion or holiness of heart. This cannot be denied without contradicting our Saviour’s explanation, and asserting, that the moral law does not require holiness of heart.

And as the Hebrew church did promise to obey and keep this covenant; so it is evident, that they did profess real religion. For Moses wrote all the words of the Lord. "And he took the book of the covenant, [containing the ten commands and other statutes God had given] and read in the audience of the people: And they said, all that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient." Then further to ratify the solemn covenant between God and the people, "Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." Exod. xxiv. 7, 8. This shows that real religion was both required of, and professed by the *Hebrew* church. That true holiness was required of this church, is further evident from Levit. xix. 2. God, being about to enjoin a number of religious and moral institutions upon his church, introduced them with these words, "Ye shall be holy: For I the Lord your God am holy;" shewing, that the same moral holiness was required of them, which constituted the divine character. Peter therefore quotes the same command, and addresses it to the Christian church, 1 Pet. i. 16. "Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy." This plainly teaches, that the same moral holiness was required of the Hebrew, as of the Christian church. How then can any imagine, that nothing but a ceremonial or typical holiness was required of the Hebrew church?

Further, that God did require real religion or right affections of heart, as the condition of that covenant, which he made with the Hebrew church or people, is abundantly manifest from many passages in Deut. where Moses rehearsed to the people the commands or requisitions of this covenant. Thus it is said, Deut. vi. 3, 5. "Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it, that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee in the land that floweth with milk and honey. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul," &c. Here we see that one requirement of this covenant, and a condition, on which temporal blessings in Canaan were promised, was, that they should love God with all their heart and soul. And is any thing more than this now required of the members of the Christian church? So chap. x. 12. "And now Israel what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to love and serve him with all thine heart and with all thy soul." Chap. xi. 13 and 14. "And it shall come to pass, if ye will

hearken diligently unto my commandments—to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and soul; that I will give you the rain of your land in due season," &c. which teaches, as before observed, that loving and serving God with all the heart, or real religion, was the condition, on which even temporal favors were promised to the Hebrew church or people. The same idea is clearly taught in the 22d verse of this chapter, "For if ye will diligently keep all these commandments which I command you to love the Lord your God, to walk in his ways—Then will the Lord drive out all these nations from before you." Every place from the wilderness, and Lebanon, from the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermost sea, shall our coast be. Then shall no man be able to stand before you." Here loving God, and keeping his commandments is the condition, on which God promises to give them the possession of Canaan. They had therefore no covenant title to the land of promise without love to God or real religion. Agreeably to this, God said, Judges ii. 20, 21. "Because this people have transgressed my covenant, which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice: I will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations, which Joshua left?" such words plainly shew, that the possession of Canaan was promised them on condition of keeping God's covenant, given by Moses; which, as has been already shewn, required real religion, or supreme love to God.

So it was commanded Joshua, that he should observe to do according to all the law, which Moses commanded, and that he should do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and shalt have good success." Joshua i. 7, 8. Here also success in taking possession of the land of Canaan was promised Joshua on the condition that he would observe the law of Moses, which required love to God with all the heart and soul. He therefore, in a solemn charge to the Reubenites, Gadites and half the tribes of Manassah, when they were returning to the land of their possession, said, "take diligent heed to do the commandment and law, which Moses, the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, and to serve him with all your heart and soul." Joshua xiii. 5. Do not these words teach in the clearest manner, that God, in the law or covenant which he gave by Moses, required supreme love, or holiness of heart, as its condition?

Again, Deut. xxi. 3, 5, 10. Moses by direction of Jeho-

vah, promised, that God would turn the captivity of his people and bring them into the land, which their fathers possessed, and multiply them, &c. "If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God to keep his commandments and statutes, which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart and soul." This passage clearly proves, that God in his covenant with that people, contained in the book of the law, required them to love him with all the heart, and that this was the condition, on which he promised to grant them, even temporal blessings and deliverances.

The requirements of this covenant, which God made with the Israelites and what was professed by them, are very clearly expressed chap. xxvi. 16, 17, 18, 19. "This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments: Thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul." This is what God required of his ancient church; and does he now require more of the Christian church than to keep his commands with all their heart? The next verse expresses what they promised or professed. "Thou hast avouched [or professed] the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and commandments, and to hearken to his voice." And does any Christian church now profess or promise more than this? And in consequence of this their profession it is said, "And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee: And to make thee high above all nations, in praise and in name, and in honor, that thou mayest be a holy people unto the Lord thy God." What then can be more evident, than that real religion was required of, and professed by God's ancient church, and that it was required of them in that covenant which was the constitution of that church?

This is confirmed beyond all rational dispute by what took place in the days of Josiah. The laws and commands, which were delivered by God to his people in the wilderness, and rehearsed by Moses in Deuteronomy, were written in a book, called the book of the law, and the book of the covenant; because it contained the requisitions and promises of the covenant, which God made with his people. This book was found in the house of the Lord in the days of Josiah, and he assembled the people of Judah to renew covenant with the Lord, 2 Kings, xxiii. 2, 3. "And he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant. And the king made a cove-

nant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commands, and testimonies, and statutes with all their heart and soul, to perform all the words of this covenant that were written in this book: And all the people stood to the covenant." Here we may notice, that when they renewed covenant, they promised "to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments with all their heart and soul," and that they did this "to perform the words of this covenant." This clearly shews, that this covenant required the heart or real religion. This is further evident from the 25th verse of this chapter. There it is said of Josiah, "And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul, according to all the laws of Moses." Here his turning to the Lord with all his heart and soul is declared to be according to the Mosaic law or covenant, teaching, that this was its requirement. Accordingly the Psalmist speaking of their promises, says, Psalm lxxviii. 36, 37. "Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with him;" showing that they professed to have their heart or affections right with God; otherwise they would not have been guilty of lying in their professions, because their heart was not right.

This sentiment is also corroborated by the words of the apostle, Rom. ii. 28, 29. "For he is not a Jew, who is one outwardly. But he is a Jew, who is one inwardly." These words plainly shew, that real piety was required of, and professed by the members of the Jewish church, and therefore none were real Jews, or what they professed to be; unless they had real religion, or were so inwardly. For if true piety were not professed by them; how could it be said, that none were real Jews, who were not so inwardly or at heart? If mere external obedience was what God's covenant required of that church, as some imagine; then all would have been real Jews—or what they professed, who were so outwardly, or yielded an external obedience; which is directly contrary to the declaration of the apostle. Agreeably to this, Christ calls Nathaniel "an Israelite indeed," because truly pious. Does not this plainly teach, that none were Jews or Israelites indeed—were what they professed and were required to be, unless like Nathaniel they possessed real piety.

Omitting many other passages which might be mentioned, is it not abundantly evident, that real religion or right affec-

tions of heart were as really required of, and professed by the members of the Jewish, as of the Christian church. And as the same qualifications were required by God for membership in both churches, it is manifest, they are one and the same church.

Is it not surprising, that any, in direct contradiction to all these plain declarations of the word of God, can imagine, as the Baptists generally do, that God did not require real religion in the covenant, which he made with his ancient people, and that they might according to God's requirements become members of his church, and so perform the conditions of his covenant as to be entitled to its promises without any religion of heart? This covenant required them to love and serve God, and to keep his commands with all their heart and soul; and if this does not imply real religion, what does? Are there any passages in the bible, which more clearly or strongly express true piety? God speaking of his covenant, Psalm l. 16. says to the wicked, "What hast thou to do—that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?" This plainly teaches, that the wicked had no right to take God's covenant into their mouth, or profess to assent to it; and that consequently this covenant required real holiness as its condition. For if it did not, then the wicked might consistently enter into it—yea, might fulfil all its conditions while impenitent. It appears therefore, from this passage, that God viewed his covenant very differently from what they do, who suppose, that it did not require holiness of heart, and that impenitent sinners might consistently take it upon them, and even comply with its requisitions. Besides, if it did not require the heart, how could they be guilty of lying and flattering in professing to comply with its requirements, because their hearts were not right? And how could the apostle declare, that he was not a Jew who was one outwardly, if external obedience was all that was required for membership in the Jewish church? And why did God finally break off the Jews from their church-standing "because of unbelief," if faith was not required by him, as the term of membership?

Many bewilder themselves in this matter by looking at the practice of the Hebrew church rather than at God's requirements. They see, that the Israelites all professedly entered into God's covenant, and became members of his church; although the greater part, probably had no real religion. Hence they conclude, that this was not required as a qualification for covenanting, or church-standing under that

dispensation. But might we not as well argue, that real religion is not required as a qualification for membership in the Christian church; because in some ages this church has been very corrupt, and but very few of its members manifested any true piety? But thus to look at the practice of the church, instead of the divine institution or requisitions, leads to innumerable errors and mistakes. If we would discover the truth, we must look at God's requirements, which cannot be in the least invalidated by the practice of a church. Whatever then may have been the conduct of professors in the Jewish or Christian church, it is manifest, that God has always required holiness of heart as the term of covenanting under both dispensations. And from the sameness of the qualifications for membership under both dispensations it appears, that the church is the same.

Since many, who allow, that real holiness or religion is required of the members of the Christian church, very strenuously deny, that it was required in God's covenant with his ancient church; let us compare the terms or profession, required in both churches. Under the new Testament dispensation after Christ was manifested in the flesh, faith in him or a believing in him with all the heart was required as a term of admission into the Christian church. The terms required in the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants, and professed by God's ancient church, were to "walk before God and be perfect (or sincere)--to love him, walk in his ways, and keep all his commandments with all the heart and soul!" Now these requirements of God's covenant with the Hebrew church, are certainly quite as extensive, and as expressive of real holiness or religion; as believing in Christ with all the heart, which is required as the term of membership in the Christian church. How strange then that any can suppose, that real religion was not as much required in God's covenant with the Hebrew church, as it is in his covenant with the Christian?

3. The rules of moral conduct, and of discipline which God enjoined upon the Jewish and Christian churches are in many respects very similar; and this is another evidence of their being essentially the same. The command to the Hebrew church was "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself--thou shalt not vex, nor oppress a stranger--thou shalt love him as thyself. If thou meet thy enemy's ox or ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back"--teaching that they ought to be disposed to do good to their enemies. And the

directions to the members of the Christian church are, "Love one another—do good to all, as ye have opportunity—Love your enemies, and do good to them that hate you," &c. God in his laws and commandments to his ancient church strictly forbade adultery, fornication, sodomy, idolatry, witchcraft, theft, lying, falsehood, fraud, oppression, profane swearing, revenge, grudging, and other similar immoralities, see Exod. xxi.—xxiii. chap. and Levit. xix. and xx. chap. And these same vices are expressly forbidden by the new Testament in the Christian church. The directions concerning the discipline in the ancient church were "Thou shalt not hate thy brother; Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor [or brother] and not suffer sin upon him." By this command they were obligated to rebuke or reprove their neighbors, whenever they fell into sin, and thus to endeavor to reclaim them. Agreeably to this, Christ's command to the Christian church is, "If thy brother trespass against thee, [i. e. be guilty of any open sin] go and tell him his fault," and endeavor to reclaim him. And if the offending brother repents, and makes confession and satisfaction for his offence, he is to be forgiven and received again into the Christian church. So when an Israelite transgressed any of God's commands, or institutions, moral or ceremonial, which was not punishable by death, he was commanded to bring his sin-offering—to lay his hand on the head of it as a token of confession and repentance; and the priest was to make an atonement for him by offering it, and thus he was to be forgiven. See Levit. iv. v. and vi. chap. If an offender in the Christian church remains obstinate and impenitent, or perseveres in his sins; he is to be cast off and excommunicated. If he will not hear the church he is to be unto you as an heathen man.—They are to withdraw from every one, that walketh disorderly, and purge out from among them such wicked persons. So in the Hebrew church, "The soul that doth ought presumptuously, [which doubtless implies all obstinate perseverance in disobedience to, or the neglect of, any divine command; as well as more gross heinous sins] the same reproached the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from his people. Because he hath despised the word of the Lord." Numb. xiii. 30. It appears then, that all immoral conduct and transgressions of God's commands were matters of discipline in the Hebrew, as well as in the Christian church. Since therefore the rules of moral conduct, and of discipline in both churches were so similar in many respects, it corroborates

rates the evidence already exhibited, that they are essentially the same church, under two different dispensations.

Had therefore the requirements of God's covenant been attended to in the admission of persons into the Hebrew church, and had the discipline God enjoined, been strictly observed, that church would have been as visibly holy or spiritual, and free from corruptions, as the Christian church ever has been. The reason then, why the Hebrew church at times became so formal, corrupt and degenerate, was, that these rules of admission and discipline were not strictly attended to. God therefore speaking of the corruption and degeneracy of this church, says "Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: They have put no difference between the holy and profane." Ezek. xxii. 26. And it is owing to a similar neglect of the rules of admission and discipline, that Christian churches often become very corrupt.

4. The scripture gives the same character both of the Jewish and Christian churches, which shews them to be the same. God said to the Hebrew church, Exod. xix. 5, 6. "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." And in Deuteronomy it is said, "The Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself." If this is compared with the description given of the Christian church, 1 Pet. ii. 9. it will appear to be almost exactly the same. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people." This character of the Christian church was evidently quoted from that, given of the Hebrew, and is essentially the same; consequently they are both the same church.

Again, God, or rather Christ (who in the scripture was the God of Abraham and of the Hebrew church) was represented as the husband of his ancient church or people, and they as his wife or spouse. Thus Jer. iii. 14. "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you." Also chap. xxxi. 32. "They brake my covenant, although I was an husband unto them." Thus Christ was represented as the husband of the Hebrew church, and they as his spouse, on account of their covenant obligations to be his. Agreeably to this, the Christian church in the new Testament is called, "the bride, the Lamb's wife," and

Christ is said to be the head of the church, as the husband is the head of the wife.

Since therefore the Hebrew and Christian churches are both represented in a marriage relation to Christ, as being his spouse, and he as being a husband to them; it is a proof, that they are one and the same.

Christ also is styled the shepherd of his ancient church.—“Give ear, O shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock.” Psalm lxxx. 1. And is he not represented as standing in the same relation to the Christian church? “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep.” If then, Christ is the shepherd of both the Hebrew and Christian churches, and they are both his flock or sheep, does it not shew, that they are essentially the same church?

5. That the Hebrew and Christian church is the same, may be argued from the consideration, that the sacraments or ordinances of the church, under both dispensations, are similar in their import and design. Thus circumcision and baptism, and the passover, and the Lord's supper, are designed to answer the same ends in the church under different dispensations.

1st. Circumcision was a token of the covenant of grace between God and those who applied this token to themselves or children, as has been already shown. It denoted, that they gave their assent to this covenant, and thus was a seal or token of their faith. Accordingly the apostle calls it, “a seal of the righteousness of the faith which Abraham had being yet uncircumcised;” showing, that he first believed, and then circumcised himself and household in token of his faith. So baptism now is a token of faith in Christ, and thus a seal of the covenant of grace. For Philip told the eunuch, that he might be baptized, if he believed with all his heart; which plainly shows, that baptism is a token of faith, which is the condition of the covenant of grace; and thus it is a seal of this covenant and a token of assent to it. When therefore a person dedicates himself or children in the ordinance of baptism, it is a token of his faith, and so of the covenant of grace between God and him. In this respect circumcision and baptism appear to be of the same import and design.

2dly. Circumcision, by taking away a part of the flesh, denoted the necessity of a change of heart, and thus it taught the native depravity of mankind, and their need of spiritual renovation. Moses evidently understood it in this sense, and therefore says to the Israelites, Deut. x. 16. “Circumcise

the foreskin of your hearts, and be no more stiff-necked." Deut. xxx. 6. "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart and the heart of thy seed to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul." Accordingly the apostle declares, "that circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit." Circumcision then evidently denoted renovation of heart, and so the natural corruption of mankind. When therefore a Hebrew circumcised his child, it taught, that the child was polluted, and needed spiritual renovation. So baptism now strikingly denotes the pollution of the human heart, and the necessity of being cleansed by the "washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Hence the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit upon persons is called baptizing them with the Holy Ghost, as in Acts xi 15, 16. So also in Ezek. xxxvi. 25, God says, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean;" referring to the sanctifying influences of the Spirit, denoted by baptism. When therefore, baptism is applied to infants or others; like circumcision, it teaches their native depravity, and need of being cleansed or renewed by the Holy Spirit.

3dly. Circumcision might typify or point to the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin, and so be designed to lead the Hebrew church to feel the necessity of the shedding of blood for the remission of sin. Baptism now answers the same end. It is adapted to impress the mind with a sense of the necessity of being sprinkled with the blood of the Redeemer, "the blood of sprinkling," as the only ground of pardon and justification.

4thly. Circumcision was the initiating ordinance or door of admission into God's ancient church in this sense, that no one could become a member of that church, be entitled to its privileges, or partake of the passover, unless circumcised. "For no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof." So now no person can rightly become a member of the christian church, or be admitted to the Lord's supper, the Christian passover; unless baptized.

In these various particulars the import and design of circumcision and baptism are similar, and they very evidently answer the same ends in the church of God under different dispensations.

The resemblance also between the passover and the Lord's supper is very plain and striking. The paschal lamb typified Christ, the Lamb of God. Its being killed, the sprinkling of its blood upon the door to save from the destroying angel,

roasting it in fire, &c. strikingly denote the distressing sufferings and death of the Saviour, and the salvation of those who are sprinkled with his blood. And are not these same truths represented in a lively manner by the Lord's supper? In this, there is a representation of the broken and wounded body of Christ, and of his blood shed for sinners. Hence the apostle speaking of the Lord's supper, uses figuratively the very language of the paschal feast, "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (Cor. v. 7, 8. The chief difference between the passover and the Lord's supper is, that one pointed to a Saviour to come, and the other to a Saviour already come. Since therefore the sacraments under the old and new dispensation so perfectly agree, as to their design and import; is it not abundantly evident, that the Hebrew and Christian church is the same?

6. We shall adduce further proof of this doctrine from plain express passages of scripture. Thus Heb. iii. 2, 3, 5, 6. both the Hebrew and Christian churches are called God's or Christ's house, and are spoken of as the same house. Speaking of Jesus Christ, it is said, "Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his [i. e. God's or Christ's] house. For this man, [referring to Christ] was accounted worthy of more glory than Moses, in as much as he who hath builded the house hath more honor than the house."

By Christ's house here is evidently meant his church, which in scripture is frequently called his house. And as it was that church, in which Moses was faithful, it must mean the Hebrew church. This church is here declared to be Christ's, for it is said, that he built it. "And Moses was verily faithful in all his [i. e. Christ's] house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we" referring to professing Christians.

Here we may observe, that Christians or the Christian church are called Christ's house, and so is the Hebrew church; and that Christ, is declared to be the builder of the Hebrew as well as of the Christian church; which shows, that they are the same; as they are both Christ's church.

Further our Saviour says to the Jews, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Matt. xxi. 43. By the king-

dorn of God here is meant their church or covenant privileges, which have long since been taken from them. Since therefore that very "kingdom of God" which was taken from the Jews "because of their unbelief," has been given to the believing Gentiles; it plainly manifests, that the Christian church is essentially the same as the Jewish—is but the continuance of that under a new dispensation.

Again, in the prophecies concerning the calling of the Gentiles, they are represented as being added to God's ancient church and filling the place of the Jews who were broken off and becoming one church with them; which shows, that the Christian church is but a continuation of the Jewish. Thus *Isai. xlix. 19—22.* God speaking of Zion, his ancient church, says, "Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together and come to thee: As I live saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all as with an ornament. The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell. Then thou shalt say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate a captive, and removing to and fro? Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles—and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders." It is evident from this passage, that the church to which the Gentiles were gathered and united, was one, that had lost her other children or members, and had been desolate, a captive, &c. And this description exactly applies to the Hebrew church, which had been frequently desolate and in captivity, and which, upon the introduction of the Christian dispensation, lost the greater part of her other children or members, who were broken off because of unbelief. And their place, according to the prophecy, was more than filled with Gentile converts. This prophecy therefore exactly corresponds with what the apostle says *Rom. xi.* about the unbelieving Jews being broken off from the olive tree, and the believing Gentiles being grafted in among the remaining branches; and it clearly shows, that the Gentile converts would be incorporated into the ancient Jewish church. Consequently the Christian and Jewish churches are but one and the same church under two different dispensations. The same sentiment is plainly taught in many other similar prophecies concerning the calling in of the Gentiles. It may also be observed, that when these Gentiles were

united to God's ancient church, they are represented as bringing the children of the church in their arms. This may intimate that children of Gentile Christian parents are to be dedicated to God, and to enjoy the same place and privileges in the Christian church, that children of Jewish parents did in the ancient church.

That the believing Gentiles were thus actually incorporated into God's ancient church is clearly taught by the apostle. Eph. ii. Reminding the Gentile converts of their former unhappy situation in time past, he says—"At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." Then mentioning how Christ had broken down the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, that he might reconcile both unto God in one body, he says, to the believing Gentiles, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners (strangers from the covenants of promise, and aliens or foreigners from the commonwealth or church of Israel) but fellow-citizens with the saints (of God's ancient church, belonging to the same community and partaking of the same privileges) and of the household of God"—"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, this shows that the Hebrew church, to whom the ancient prophets ministered; and the Christian to whom the apostles ministered, are built upon the same foundation, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, which supports and unites both in one. Consequently the Christian and Hebrew church must be essentially the same.

This truth is also abundantly evident from our text and context. Thus, in verse 17th it is said, that some of the branches, denoting the unbelieving Jews, were broken off, and the believing Gentiles were grafted in among the Jews or natural branches which stood; and with them partook "of the root and fatness of the olive-tree." Now what church can this be, denoted by the olive-tree, from which unbelieving Jews were broken off, and into which the believing Gentiles were grafted in their room?

The Baptists say that it was the Christian church. But the unbelieving Jews were never in that church, as distinct from the Jewish, either really or professedly, and so could not be broken off from it. Would it not be very improper and unintelligible for the apostle to say, that the greater part of the Jews were broken off from the Christian church because of unbelief, when

be merely meant, that they had never joined themselves to it? Yea it would have been just as improper as to have said, that all the unbelieving heathen had been broken off from the Christian church, because they had never belonged to it. It is manifest then that it must be the Jewish church from which the unbelieving Jews were broken off; for of this church they were visibly or professedly members.

Since therefore the believing Gentiles were grafted into the visible Jewish church among those who remained in it, to partake with them in its blessings and privileges, it is certain, that the Christian is but the continuance and extension of the Jewish church.

Further, verse 20. "Well, because of unbelief they (i. e. Jews) were broken off, and thou (i. e. believing Gentile) standest by faith." This shows, that faith was a condition of standing both in the Jewish and Christian church. For the Jews were broken off from their church standing because of unbelief, or for want of faith, and the Christian stands by faith; which clearly proves, that they are both one and the same church.

Again, verse 23, it is said, that the Jews, "if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in;" and verse 24, "how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive-tree."—Now the Jews, who had been broken off, were, upon their believing, to be received into the Christian church. Their being received into this church is called being grafted into their own olive-tree, and it is represented, that they were grafted into the same olive-tree or church from which they were broken off. This clearly shows, that the Christian church is but the continuation of the Jewish church. For if the Christian church is essentially different from the Jewish, and not a continuation of it, as the Baptists imagine, what propriety would there be in calling the Christian church "their own olive-tree," since these unbelieving Jews never in any sense belonged to this church, either visibly or really? And how improper to represent their being received into the Christian church, as being grafted into the same olive-tree, from which they are broken off for their unbelief? Besides they are called the *natural branches* of this olive-tree or church into which they were to be received if they did not abide in unbelief. But if the Christian church is not the continuation of the Jewish, but entirely different; what meaning or propriety could there be in calling these unbelieving Jews the natural branches of the Christian church, or olive-tree? For upon

this supposition they could in no sense be the natural branches of this church. But if according to the apostle's representation we consider the Christian church the same as the Jewish, being the same church continued under a new dispensation; we can easily see the propriety of calling the unbelieving Jews the natural branches of the Christian church or olive tree; as they are the natural descendants of this church under the old dispensation. As therefore the Christian church, into which the Jews, if they remain not in unbelief, are to be grafted, is called their own olive-tree, and they are said to be the natural branches of it, it is very evident that this church is but the continuation and extension of the Jewish. Accordingly the apostle, Gal. iii. speaks of the blessings of Abraham, (those blessings promised in the Abrahamic covenant, and enjoyed by the Jewish church) coming on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ: and says, "If ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," showing that all believers are the children of Abraham; and that therefore he is the father of the Christian as well as of the Jewish church. All the truly pious both in the Jewish and Christian church are the real children of Abraham; for he is the father of all who believe, whether circumcised or uncircumcised, as the apostle declares. Consequently, all professors of religion under both dispensations are professedly his children. But as all, "which were of Israel," or members of the Jewish church, "were not Israel," or the true children of Abraham; but many were Jews outwardly who were not so inwardly; so at present there are undoubtedly many members of the Christian church, who are outwardly or professedly Christians and Abraham's children, that are not so at heart. But omitting many other passages that might be mentioned, is there not very clear and abundant evidence, that the Jewish and Christian church are essentially one and the same? But,

Lastly, since the Baptists in general very confidently deny, that real religion was required in the covenants, which God made with Abraham, and with the Hebrew church in the wilderness; it may be well to examine this sentiment, and consider some of its consequences.

1st. In the Abrahamic covenant God required as the condition, that Abraham should "walk before him, and be perfect." And in all the revelations he made to the patriarchs before the days of Moses, there is no requirement more expressive of real religion than this in the Abrahamic covenant. If therefore real religion was not required in the

Abrahamic covenant, it will follow, that God never required, or even mentioned real religion in any of the revelations, that he communicated to mankind before Moses, which was a period of about 2500 years.

And in the covenant, which God made with the Hebrew church in the wilderness, he required them to fear the Lord their God, to walk in all his ways, and to love and serve him with all their heart and soul—to circumcise the foreskin of their heart and be no more stiff-necked. Deut. x. 12, 16. They were also required to worship before the Lord their God, and to keep his statutes and judgments with all their heart, and soul, Deut. xxvi. 10, 16. And on condition that they would obey his voice, and keep his covenant, God promised to bless them, be their God, and take them for his peculiar people. Now there are certainly no requirements in the Old Testament more expressive of real holiness or religion of heart, than these in this covenant. If therefore God did not require real religion as the condition of his covenant with the ancient church, he has no where required or enjoined it in the Old Testament. But can any one imagine, that God, in all his revelations to mankind for 4000 years, never required real religion or right affections of heart? as must be the case, if it was not required in the covenants, made with Abraham and the Hebrew church. This certainly is very contrary to the representation of our Saviour. For he declared, that the sum of the law or Mosaic dispensation and the prophets is to love God with all the heart, and our neighbor as ourselves; which is the essence of all real religion.

Further, it has been universally allowed, that the book of Psalms is as expressive of true piety and devotion, as any part of the bible. But there is not one passage in all that book, which more strongly expresses real religion, than the requirements of the covenant “to love and serve God, walk in his ways, and keep his statutes with all the heart and soul.” Consequently there is not one word said in the book of Psalms about real piety or religion, if it was not required in the covenant, made with the Hebrew church.

Therefore it must be allowed either that real religion was required of, and professed by the Hebrew church, and so this church is essentially the same with the Christian; or else it must be denied, that God ever required, or even mentioned real religion in all the Old Testament. But which of these

propositions is true, no person acquainted with his bible can doubt for a moment.

2d. It appears as if it would be inconsistent with the divine holiness and perfections to enter into a covenant with moral beings, which did not require real holiness or love to God as its condition, and to promise them peculiar favors upon mere external, unholy obedience. It would in fact be saying, that real love to God was a hard requirement, and therefore he was willing to dispense with it. There have been great clamours and cavils against God in this wicked world, because he requires depraved creatures, who are wholly opposed to his holy character, to exercise supreme love to him, and to do whatever they do to his glory. Sinners contend, that this is a very hard and unreasonable requirement. But God in his word insists, that this is just and fit, and that his law, which requires this, is holy, just and good. This is one great part of the controversy, which subsists in this world between God and sinners.

If therefore God in such an important covenant as that, which he made with the people of Israel, and which was to be known thro' his vast dominions, had relinquished his claim on the heart, by requiring nothing but external, heartless obedience, and had stipulated to grant them peculiar blessings on any condition, short of holy obedience; it would have been, in a very public manner, giving up in a great degree the controversy of sinners. The language of such conduct in God would have been, that love to him or obedience of heart was rather a hard, unreasonable requirement, as sinners objected; and that therefore he was willing to dispense with it. How derogatory would such conduct be to the divine character, and how would it countenance the cavils of the wicked, that it is hard to require the heart? How also would it have encouraged the Israelites in a formal unholy obedience? For if God did not require the heart or real religion in those laws and commands, which constituted the requirements of his covenant, and which were all that he pretended to require of them; they might justly conclude, that he did not mean to insist on the heart. For in all the revelations and directions which God gave his people by Moses, or by the prophets afterwards, he never intimated to them, that he required, or even wished any thing more of them, than to fulfil the requirements of his covenant. It is said that the Lord testified against Israel and Judah by all the prophets, saying, turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and statutes,

according to the law, which I commanded your fathers. If therefore this covenant did not require the heart or a holy obedience, then the Israelites had just reason to conclude, that God did not mean to insist on the heart, and thus it was directly calculated to encourage them in a heartless unholy obedience.

What an impeachment then would it be of God's holy character to suppose, that his covenant with his ancient church did not require the heart or real holiness, and so had a direct tendency to encourage a mere formal, unholy obedience, by giving them reason to conclude, that he did not mean to insist on the heart? How different is this idea of the requirements of the covenant from the representation, which Moses gave of it, when he says to the people, "And now Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear him to walk in all his ways—to love and serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul." In this and many other passages Moses expressly tells them, that God's covenant with them required them to love and keep his commands with all the heart, and that it was on this condition, that they were to be his people and be entitled to temporal blessings. Thus he carefully guards them against the idea that God did not mean to insist on the heart, and that his covenant did not require a holy obedience as its condition.

Further, if God did not require holiness of heart in his covenant with Israel, as the condition of the promised blessings; then he in fact promised to bless and reward them for doings, which might be performed with an impenitent heart, or, in other words, for sinful, unholy doings. For there is no medium in moral actions between sin and holiness, and all moral actions, done with an unholy heart, must be sinful. "A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit." Had God therefore, in his covenant, promised peculiar blessings to such doing or obedience, as might be performed with an impenitent heart; would it not have been rewarding and encouraging impenitence, and thus have been the foundation of a high impeachment of the divine character? Would it not imply, that impenitent sinners may do what is pleasing in the sight of a holy God, and thus contradict the declaration of the apostle, that "without faith it is impossible to please him?" Did not the Most High expressly declare to his ancient church, that the sacrifices of the wicked were an abomination to him? Did he not also manifest a high disapprobation of the unholy obedience and religious services of the

wicked? Isa. i. chap. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths; the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with, it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and appointed feasts my soul hateth." Now since all the impenitent act from the same unholy selfish temper, and are equally destitute of all holiness, and since God here manifested such a disapprobation of the unholy obedience and services of the wicked; the supposition is most unreasonable, that his covenant required nothing more than such an external unholy obedience, which he thus condemns; and that he even covenanted to reward such external unholy obedience.

Again, the Pharisees and Jews, in general, in the days of our Saviour, a time when the Jewish church had become very formal and degenerate, had imbibed this very idea, that God in his covenant or laws, given by Moses required nothing more than a strict external observance of all the moral and ceremonial laws. When therefore our Saviour mentioned to one of them the requirements of the moral law, he says, "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" It seems, that he verily thought, he had fulfilled the requirements of God's law or covenant, because he had yielded an external obedience, and therefore thought he was by covenant entitled to God's favor. Paul also speaking of his old Pharisaical religion, Philip. iii. 6. says, that touching the righteousness, which is in the law, he was blameless, because by a strict external obedience he had fulfilled the requirements of this law, as it was generally understood by the Jews and Pharisees. But what did the Lord Jesus, who is the faithful and true witness, say on this subject. When one asked him, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law"—Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul and mind. This is the first and great command—The second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself—On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Here the saviour expressly declares, that love to God and man, or real religion, was required in the law of Moses, which constituted the requirements of God's covenant with his ancient church. Is it not strange then that after our Saviour has so plainly decided the question, that any who profess themselves Christians should again imbibe the old Pharisaical sentiment, that this law or covenant required nothing

more than an external obedience, and might be complied with by impenitent sinners.

Since, upon examination, this sentiment of the *Baptists*, that God did not require real holiness of heart, as the condition of his covenant with the ancient church, is directly contrary to so many plain representations of the bible, and leads to so many absurd consequences, it is certain, that it is false; and that real religion was required in God's covenant with that church, as much as it now is in the Christian.

Is not the proof from the various arguments which have been adduced, full and unanswerable, that the Jewish and Christian church are essentially the same; or that the latter is but the continuance and extension of the former under a different dispensation?

Probably more has been said on this subject, than may be thought necessary by some. But as the sentiment we have been proving is strenuously denied by the Baptists, and their strongest arguments and objections against Infant-Baptism are grounded on the idea, that the Abrahamic covenant was not the covenant of grace, and that the Jewish church was essentially different from the Christian; it was thought expedient to establish these points beyond all reasonable dispute.

But however clear the proof, which has been exhibited, doubtless, various objections will be urged against the doctrine we have been illustrating and establishing. We shall proceed therefore to obviate some of the most plausible of these objections, as was proposed under the second general head.

SERMON II.

BUT here it may be well to observe, that very plausible objections may be raised against the most certain truths of reason and revelation; and that persons may have very full, satisfactory evidence of a truth, and yet not be able clearly to answer all the objections and difficulties, which may be urged against it. Since therefore we have such direct, full and abundant proof, from the sacred scriptures, of the truth of our doctrine; it ought by no means to shake our belief of it, even where there are objections against it that we could not fully answer. But it is apprehended, that the difficulties, which are urged against the sentiment we have been establishing, may in general be easily obviated.

OBJECTION 1ST. The Abrahamic covenant, of which circumcision was the seal, respected chiefly the land of Canaan and temporal blessings; therefore it was not the covenant of grace.

ANSWER. The covenant of grace, as before shown, means a covenant proposed to unworthy sinners, requiring repentance and faith, or real religion as its condition; and promising God's favor and eternal blessedness, or that God will be their God, to those who comply with its requisitions. When therefore a covenant does thus require real religion as its condition, and graciously promise God's favor to a compliance, it is the covenant of grace; notwithstanding it may promise temporal blessings in addition to spiritual.

And that the Abrahamic covenant did require faith or real religion as its condition, and promise God's favor, or that he would be a God to those who complied with it, has been fully proved. Consequently it was the covenant of grace. Granting therefore, that God did in that covenant promise the land of Canaan and other temporal blessings, in addition to spiritual, it does not afford the least evidence, that it was not the covenant of grace. We might as well argue, that the gospel dispensation is not a covenant of grace; because it declares, that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;" and because Christ promises with respect to food and

raiment, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all *these things* shall be added unto you."

Besides, if the Abrahamic covenant was not the covenant of grace, and promised only the land of Canaan and temporal blessings, as many affirm; how is it, that they, who are Christ's, are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise? "Do all Gentile believers inherit the land of Canaan, and multiply a numerous posterity?" Certainly they cannot in any sense be heirs of the blessings of Abraham, if the covenant, made with him, was not the covenant of grace, but respected temporal blessings only. But viewing it as the covenant of grace, and promising spiritual blessings; we can readily see, how all believers are Abraham's seed, and heirs of the spiritual blessings, promised in that covenant; and how by this covenant he became the father of all them that believe. Thus the blessings of Abraham have come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ.

Further, what has now been said shows the weakness of another similar objection. It is objected, that the requirements of God's covenant with his ancient church were enforced chiefly by promises of temporal blessings, and threatenings of temporal evils. Hence it is concluded, that this covenant did not require real religion and promise spiritual blessings, and so was not a covenant of grace.

In answer to this it may be observed, that under that dispensation, the knowledge, which mankind had of divine things and the eternal world, was but faint and obscure; and therefore it was much more necessary to address the senses by visible objects, than it is under the clear light of the gospel. Consequently their rights and modes of worship under that dispensation were more pompous, showy, and calculated to impress the senses. Their compliance with the divine requirements was more enforced with promises of temporal good, and threatenings of temporal evil, by which their external senses were more immediately addressed. But this is no evidence, that real religion or holy obedience was not required, and that no spiritual blessings were promised. For God, if he sees fit, may as well enforce a holy obedience by motives of temporal good and evil, as by those of eternal. Yea, God does enforce obedience in the New-Testament by such temporal considerations. Thus it is said, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." "He that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they

“speak no guile.” “And who is he that will harm you, if we be followers of that which is good.” Also Rom. xiii. Paul urges Christians to do good from the consideration, that in this way they would have praise or encouragement of civil rulers, and to avoid evil from the consideration, that the ruler is “the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil.” Ministers of the gospel likewise frequently urge their hearers to avoid sin from the consideration of its evil ruinous tendency in this world as well as the future; and to embrace religion, because it will be for their present and future good. But this is no evidence, that the obedience required in the New-Testament is not a holy obedience. Consequently it can be no proof that a holy obedience was not required in God’s covenant with his ancient church, because this obedience was enforced by many promises of temporal good, and threatenings of temporal evil.

Obj. 2nd. The Hebrew church was national, the whole nation being required to circumcise their children, keep the passover, and thus become members of that church; otherwise they were to be cut off from national, as well as from church privileges; and the whole nation did thus become members of that church, altho^g the greater part of them were probably destitute of grace. Therefore it may be concluded, that holiness of heart was not required in the covenant, made with the Israelitish church, as a term of communion; and so it must be essentially different from the Christian church, in which faith or real religion is required of all its members.

Ans. It will be granted, that God promised peculiar blessings temporal and spiritual, to his ancient church, and required all the Hebrew nation to enter into, and keep his covenant, observe his institutions, and thus become members of that church upon pain of his displeasure, and of being cut off from all these privileges. But does not God now require all nations, who enjoy the gospel, to repent, believe, unite with his church, and observe divine ordinances as much as he did the Hebrew nation? And does he not promise special blessings to those, who cordially comply with these requirements, and denounce dreadful threatenings against those who neglect them; as really as he did with respect to the Hebrew nation? And are not persons as criminal for neglecting these duties now, as the Jews were under that dispensation? Yea, are they not more so, as they sin against greater light?

External disobedience in neglecting circumcision, or the

other divine commands and institutions, was to deprive the Jew of the external privileges of that church, and expose him to divine displeasure. And is it not equally true, that external disobedience, in neglecting baptism, and the other commands and ordinances of the gospel, ought now to deprive a person of the privileges of the Christian church; and does it not actually expose him to the displeasure of God? And as internal disobedience or impenitence of heart deprived the Jew of spiritual and eternal blessings, so it does persons under the Christian dispensation. All nations therefore under the gospel are as much required and obligated to enter into God's covenant, unite with his church, and observe all divine ordinances, upon penalty of God's displeasure, as the Jews were. For "God now commandeth all men every where to repent," upon pain of his wrath, and every day's neglect of this command exposes to everlasting destruction. If therefore the covenant, made with the Hebrew church, did not require real religion, because the whole nation were required by a certain penalty immediately to enter into it, as some argue; it will also follow, that the gospel dispensation does not require holiness of heart, because all men are required immediately to repent and embrace it upon pain of divine displeasure. The objection implies that God has no right by penalties to require persons immediately to repent and embrace religion. If he has, as all must allow who believe the bible, then his requiring all the Hebrew nation immediately to enter into his covenant, affords not the least evidence, that this covenant did not require real holiness as its condition. The truth is, God by weighty promises and threatenings does now, and always has required all, wherever he has sent his word, immediately to assent to his covenant, unite with his church, and observe all his ordinances. He gives none any permission to neglect his commands a single day. But he always requires them to do these things with the heart, or with right affections.

Accordingly as has been shown, the requirements of his covenant with the Hebrew church were, that they should love and serve God, and keep his commands with all their heart and soul; he insisted much on the heart, and severely reprov'd them, when they entered into his covenant, for lying unto him with their tongues, because their hearts were not right. And he finally broke off the unbelieving Jews from this church "because of their unbelief."

These considerations show, that God no more required, or

allowed the Jews to enter into his covenant, become members of his church, circumcise their children, and attend upon divine ordinances with an impenitent heart, than he now requires persons to do these things in such a manner. He plainly told his ancient church, that the sacrifices of the wicked were an abomination to him; to the wicked he said "What hast thou to do, that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth;" and he often expressed his detestation of hypocrisy. It was therefore as really wrong for a Jew to circumcise his child, profess to enter into covenant with God, and become a member of his church without real religion, as it would be for a person now to profess religion, sit down at the Lord's table, or offer himself or child in baptism with an impenitent heart.

With respect to the other part of the objection, that the whole Jewish nation were members of that church, while the greater part had no true religion; it may be answered, that this is no proof that real religion was not required of them as a qualification for membership. Is it any proof, that God does not require holiness of heart as a term of membership in the Christian church, because many become members, and attend upon the peculiar ordinances of the gospel, while destitute of holiness; or because the greater part in some churches may have no religion? This is looking at the practice of the church, instead of God's requirements, which tends to lead into error, rather than truth. But if we look at God's requirements, which cannot be in the least invalidated by the practice of men; it will be evident, as has been already shown, that real religion was required in his covenant with the Hebrew church. And therefore its constitution was essentially the same as that of the Christian, whether all or part of the nation were professedly members of it, or whether there were few or many hypocrites in it. These things do not at all alter the divine constitution and requirements respecting this church.

OBJ. 3d. The Hebrew children, merely by birth and being circumcised, were brought into covenant with God, and made members of his church under that dispensation. For it is said, Gen. xvii. 14. "And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people: he hath broken my covenant." But as children cannot by birth and baptism be brought into the covenant of grace, and become members of the Christian church, in which faith and holiness are required of all its

members, it may be concluded, that God's covenant with the Hebrew church was not the covenant of grace; and that this church was essentially different from the Christian.

Ans. If we consider what is meant by covenanting or being in covenant, it will be evident, that there is a sense, in which Hebrew infants were not personally brought into covenant, merely by birth and circumcision. The proper meaning of a covenant, is an agreement between parties, or it is when one party makes a conditional proposal to another; and the other party, by assenting to this proposal, enters into the covenant. No one therefore can in this sense be in covenant with another, unless he does in some way assent to the proposal or requirements of the covenant. And that the covenant, which God made with Abraham and the Hebrew church in the wilderness, did promise certain blessings on certain conditions, and so was a covenant in the common use of the word, has been already shown. Accordingly God expressly told the Israelites, that if they would obey his voice and keep his covenant, they should be his people, and he would bless them, &c. But Hebrew infants, merely by being circumcised at eight days old, neither did nor could give any assent to God's covenant; for they were wholly ignorant and passive in the transaction. Consequently they could not in this sense be brought into covenant by circumcision.

Should it then be allowed, as the Baptists suppose, that God's covenant with Abraham and the Hebrew church was not the covenant of grace, but a covenant, promising temporal blessings on condition of external obedience, still this would not remove the difficulty. For an infant by being circumcised at eight days old, could no more give his assent to a covenant, requiring external obedience, than he could to one requiring internal, or holiness of heart. There is the same difficulty in his assenting to the one, as to the other.

Let the covenant therefore with the Hebrew church be the covenant of grace, or not; yet as infants could not by their circumcision give assent to it, so they could not in this sense be brought into the covenant. They must in some way assent to the covenant, before they could be personally in covenant with God in the proper sense of the word. Nor could they without such an assent to the covenant be justly considered as proper or complete members of God's church. For the covenant, which God made with Abraham, and with his people in the wilderness was the constitution of his visible church. None therefore could be considered as proper

actual members of this church, and entitled to all its privileges; until they had in some way given their assent to this covenant or constitution, on which it was founded. This assent was as necessary to make them members in this sense, as the *Freeman's oath*, or a solemn assent to our constitution, is to make a person a complete member of our civil community.

We therefore find frequent accounts in scripture, where the whole nation of Israel explicitly entered into covenant with God by a public profession. And every individual of them, when he circumcised his child, did by this transaction profess his assent to God's covenant, and engage to keep it. They did this also whenever they offered a sacrifice, as all were commanded to do frequently. For God says, Psalm, l. 5. "Gather my saints—those that made a covenant with me by sacrifice;" which shows that sacrificing was an appointed mode of covenanting; and that a person did professedly assent to God's covenant, whenever he offered a sacrifice according to divine appointment. And this all the males were commanded to do at least three times in a year. For they were all to appear before the Lord at the three annual feasts, and none were to come empty, or without his offering, Deut. xvi. 16. The book of the law or covenant was to be read to all the people once in seven years, that they might know what it required of them; and probably, that they might publicly give their assent to it, as they did in the days of Josiah, Nehemiah, &c. In these various ways they were continually professing their personal assent to God's covenant and engaging to keep it. The Hebrew church therefore were represented as in a marriage relation to the Lord; which shows, that they did in some way personally assent to God's covenant, and profess to be his; as the wife engages to be her husband's in the marriage covenant. When therefore, the Hebrews apostatized from God, they were charged with breaking covenant with him.

Again, the Hebrew children were not merely by their birth and circumcision so brought into this covenant as to be entitled to its promises and blessings; even upon the supposition, that it promised nothing but temporal blessings as the Baptists suppose. For Esau, as well as Jacob, could plead these conditions, yet he was expressly excluded from the blessings of this covenant. So could the congregation, who thro' unbelief could not enter Canaan, and inherit the promised blessings, but wretchedly perished in the wilderness—those

also, who in the days of the apostles were broken off from God's church and deprived of all its privileges and blessings, and even the great body of the Jewish nation ever since that period. Since therefore so many millions who were born of Hebrew parents and circumcised on the eighth day, have never enjoyed the blessings, promised in God's covenant; it is evident, that merely birth and circumcision did not so bring children into this covenant, as to ensure to them its promises. Something further was required, either of them or of their parent, or of both, in order to entitle them to the promised blessings.

If then the meaning of this objection urged by the Baptists, is, that Hebrew children did by circumcision enter personally into covenant with God, and so become members of his church, or that merely birth and circumcision did ensure to them the promises and blessings of this covenant, it is evidently a very great mistake. For let the covenant require either internal or external obedience, it is evident, that an infant by being circumcised could not give any assent to it. Neither had the Hebrew children, merely by their circumcision, any more title to, or assurance of, temporal blessings than they had of spiritual. If this therefore is the meaning of the objection, it is not only evidently false; but it also involves the Baptists in the same difficulty as it does us. For there is the same difficulty in supposing, that an infant could assent to, or personally enter into, a covenant requiring internal obedience, as into one requiring external. And when they shall show, how an infant can give his assent to an external, graceless covenant; we doubtless shall be able by means of their discovery to show, how infants can in the same way give their assent to the covenant of grace. But if this is not the meaning of this objection, then it affords no proof, that God's covenant with his ancient church did not require real holiness, and was not the covenant of grace. Therefore in perfect consistence with the sentiment, that God's covenant required real religion of the Hebrew church, and that this church was essentially the same with the Christian, it may be allowed.

2dly. That the Hebrew infants might in a certain sense be in God's covenant, and belong to the church. God in his covenant or promises, might engage or give encouragement to parents, if they would walk before him in the ways of religion and be faithful in training up their children for him, that he would bless their children and be their God by circumcising their hearts. God might covenant with parents,

or make such promises concerning their children, and yet the children not be personally or actively in covenant.

And there are some passages, which, if they do not contain, absolute promises, yet certainly afford parents great encouragement to hope, that if they are faithful, God will bless their children. Thus it is said, Deut. iv. 40. "Thou shalt keep his commandments, that it may go well with thee, and thy children after thee." It is declared that the seed of the righteous is blessed—that they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them—that God's righteousness is unto children's children; to such as keep his commandments. God promises his church, which promise has a special reference to the Christian church. "I will pour out my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." Isai. xlv. 3. "And I will give you one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them and their children after them." Jer. xxxii. 39. The Psalmist also says, that the "Lord established a testimony, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget his works but keep his commandments." "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it." "Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell." Such passages seem to promise special blessings to the children of the godly, and to connect the good of their children with the obedience and faithfulness of the parents.—At least they afford great encouragement to parents to be faithful and diligent in their walk with God and in their duty towards their children. The promise in the Abrahamic covenant that God would be a God to him, and to his seed after him, may mean, not only that God would be the God of his spiritual seed, but also that God would be the God of his natural seed by circumcising their hearts, if he would fulfil the covenant by walking before God, and being perfect. The promise may at least admit of this construction.

Should it be granted then, that the Hebrew children were in covenant in this sense, that God gave promises or encouragements to parents, that if they were obedient and faithful, he would bless or renew their children, and thus be their God; would this afford any evidence, that his covenant with

the Hebrew church was not the covenant of grace? So far from this, that it would rather afford a strong proof in favor of it. And if there were such promises or encouragements given to members of the Israelitish church, respecting their children on condition of their faithfulness; then these are still in force respecting the children of believers. For believing Gentiles are engrafted into this good olive-tree or Jewish church, and partake of its root and fatness, or of its essential privileges and promises, respecting both themselves and children. And the children of believers are now as capable of being in covenant in this sense, as were the children of the Jewish church.

The Jewish children *might* also in a sense belong to the church. When a Jew circumcised his child, and thus put the seal of God's covenant upon it, the transaction denoted that he dedicated his child to God—set God's mark upon it as his peculiar property, and thus laid himself under peculiar obligations to bring it up for God. As the child was thus given up to God, the church, as being professedly God's people and friends, might be obligated to take care of it for him—to see, that it was properly instructed and trained up for his service—to exercise a suitable watch and care over it, and to endeavor to impress upon its mind a sense of the importance of divine things, and of its obligations to devote itself to God, and to enter cordially into his covenant. But if the child, when arrived at a suitable age, was disobedient, or vicious and irreligious, or if he manifested an impenitent temper by not entering personally into God's covenant, attending upon his ordinances, and obeying his statutes; it might be the divine constitution, that he should be cut off or be debarred from all the privileges of God's church or people. The Jewish children might belong to God in some such sense; as the church might be under obligation, to exercise a peculiar care and watch over them, because publicly given to God. But still these children were not personally in covenant with God, or actual members of his church, until they did in some way personally assent to his covenant. And this they did, not only by making a public profession, as the whole nation often did, but also by offering sacrifices, circumcising their children, and observing other divine ordinances; which were covenant transactions, by which they professed to assent to, or comply with God's covenant.

It might probably be on account of their being thus dedicated to God, having the seal of his covenant set upon them

as his peculiar property, and belonging to his church in the sense now pointed out, that the Jewish children were termed "the holy seed,"* the children of the covenant† and that God calls them his children whom they had born to him.‡

And as believing Gentiles are grafted into the same church and partakers of its privileges, so their children may now stand in the same relation to God's church, as Jewish children did under the ancient dispensation. And this may be the reason why the children of believers are by the apostle called holy. Also when the disciples rebuked those who brought little children unto Christ, that he might lay his hand on them, and bless and pray for them; Jesus said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Mat. xix. 14. Now those, who thus brought their children to Christ for his blessing, were doubtless believers or friends to him; otherwise they would not have brought them to him for his blessing. It appears, that these children were brought, that Christ might bless them, and not to be cured of any bodily disease; for the disciples would not have rebuked parents for bringing children to be healed. And by the kingdom of heaven our Saviour in his discourses generally meant his visible kingdom or church. When therefore he said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven" it may teach, that the children of believers now were in a certain sense to belong to the Christian church, as the Jewish children did to God's ancient church.

Should it then be allowed, as objected, that the Jewish children in some such sense were in covenant, and did belong to the church; yet this would be no proof, that God's covenant with that church was not the covenant of grace, but would rather confirm the evidence, that it was.

And if this was the case, as some passages seem to intimate, then the children of believers may stand in this same relation to God's covenant and church at present.

And viewing the baptism of children in this light would tend to render it a still more significant, important and solemn transaction. When a parent dedicates his children in this ordinance, it is a token of his faith, or assent to God's covenant, and he thus renews covenant with God, and renewedly obligates himself to walk with God in all the duties of religion, as much as when he sits down at the Lord's table: He also in this ordinance professes to give up his children to God, and binds himself to bring them up for him. The to-

* Ezra. ix. 2.

† Acts iii. 25.

Ezek. xvi. 20, 21.

ken of God's covenant being put upon them may denote, that they are given up to God as his in a peculiar manner; and that therefore the church are obligated to see, that they have a christian education and are brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and to take care and watch over them for God, as being his peculiar property. And were parents and the church faithful in instructing, warning and watching over such children, and in impressing them with a sense of their obligations to love and serve God and devote themselves to him, it would have a peculiar tendency to restrain them from vice, seriously affect their minds, and influence them to engage in religion. But it is to be lamented, that, those churches and individuals, who practise infant baptism, are so negligent of their duty towards their children; and that there are other Christians, who have so far deviated from the original constitution of God's church, that they even deny it to be their duty to give up their children to God by putting the token of his covenant upon them, and thus to obligate themselves to bring them up for God.

OBJ. 4. Canaan was a type of heaven, and the rites, ordinances and ceremonies of the ancient church were typical, and pointed to Christ and gospel truths. Therefore it may be concluded, that this church was in a typical covenant, or was a type of the Christian church, but was not the real visible church of Christ.

ANS. The scripture nowhere calls the Hebrew church a type of the Christian or gives any hint, that it was a typical in opposition to a real church. It is doubtless true, that many of the ordinances and institutions of the Hebrew church were typical, and pointed to gospel truths. But to argue, that a church must be merely typical, and not a real church of Christ, because it was taught gospel truths by types and emblems, is as absurd as it would be to argue, that because a person is taught a truth by metaphors or parables, therefore he himself must be a mere metaphor, and not a real person. Many things respecting the Hebrew church, and God's dealings with it, were doubtless designed for our instruction, and to illustrate or exemplify God's dealings with Christians. According to the declaration of the apostle, when speaking of what befel them in the wilderness, "All these happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition." Thus their journey from Egypt thro' the wilderness to Canaan, and what befel them by the way, &c. may in many respects

resemble the journey of the Christian, thro' the wilderness of this world, to the heavenly Canaan. But have we any reason to conclude, that the Hebrew was a typical and not a real church, because their conduct, and God's treatment of them, were designed for our instruction, and to illustrate his dealings with Christians? Is not this an argument in favour of, rather than against their being a real church? Might we not as well conclude, that Noah and Lot were not real Christians; because there are many things in Noah's salvation in the ark from the deluge, and in Lot's escape from Sodom, which may resemble, or be illustrative of the believer's salvation from divine wrath? When therefore persons assert, that the Hebrew church was not the real church of Christ, but a mere type of it, and thus essentially different from the Christian; they assert that, for which they have no proof, and which is directly contrary to the clearest evidence from the scriptures, which plainly teach, that the Christian and Hebrew church are the same. And since the condition of the covenant, God made with the Hebrew church in the wilderness was, that they should love *Him* with all their heart and soul, and the people expressly promised or professed to keep this covenant; is it not, at best, using words without sense or meaning to say, as some do, that this was covenanting typically, or entering into a typical covenant. What sense or meaning can there be in saying, that they avouched God *typically* to be their God; and promised to love him *typically* with all their heart, and *typically* to keep his commands with all their soul? If such promises as these, made by the Hebrew church, were covenanting typically, or entering into only a *typical* covenant, where can we find any *real* covenant or covenanting. Does any Christian church profess more than this? And were not all the members of that church, who were at heart what they professed, as much entitled to salvation, as any now are? If so, what propriety or sense can there be in calling it a *typical* covenant?

OBJ. 5. It is asserted by some, that the passage of Jer. which is quoted and applied by the apostle, Heb. viii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, is a conclusive proof that the gospel church is materially different from the Hebrew; and that the Abrahamic covenant was essentially different from this new and better covenant of grace, upon which the Christian church is now founded. The words of the apostle, upon which this objection is founded, are these. "For finding fault with them, he saith, behold the days come—when I will make a new covenant with

the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah : Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt ; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days ; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts : And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbor—and brother, saying, Know the Lord : for all shall know me from the least to the greatest.” And in that he saith “ A new covenant, he hath made the first old.” This new covenant it is supposed means the covenant of grace, on which the Christian church is built ; therefore it is concluded, that the Hebrew church could not be founded on this covenant, and so must be materially different from the Christian.

In answer to this objection it may be observed,

1st. Granting this new covenant to be the covenant of grace, on which the Christian church is built, can this covenant be *new* in this sense, that it was never revealed to mankind before the establishment of the Christian church ? If so, then all, who lived before this period, such as Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, &c. were lost ; for none can be saved but by a compliance with the covenant of grace. But who that believe the scriptures, can suppose this ? Besides, the apostle expressly declares that the gospel, which certainly contains the covenant of grace, was preached unto Abraham, and that the promise to him was “ of faith, that it might be by grace.” And this clearly proves, that the Abrahamic covenant, on which the Hebrew church was founded, was the covenant of grace. And this is further evident from the consideration that God made the same promise to Abraham and the Hebrew church, which he makes in this new covenant. He promised Abraham to be his God ; and to the Hebrew church he says, Exod. vi. 7, “ I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God.”

So in this new covenant he says “ I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” It is evident then from these considerations, that the covenant of grace, being here called *new*, cannot mean, that it was never revealed to mankind before the Christian dispensation. Consequently it affords no proof, that the Abrahamic church, which practised circumcision, was not built on the covenant of grace, or was materially different from the Christian church.

2dly. It may be noticed, that the apostle in this passage gives clear evidence, that he did not mean the Abrahamic covenant, by what he terms the *old covenant*. For God declares that this new covenant shall be, "Not according to the covenant, that he made with their fathers in the day when he took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt." This shows, that by what is here called the *old covenant*, is meant that covenant, which was made with Israel at Mount Sinai, called the Law or the Mosaic dispensation, which included the ceremonial laws and institutions, and all those types and shadows, that pointed to Christ and gospel truths. But this legal or Mosaic dispensation was entirely distinct from that dispensation of the covenant, which God made with Abraham when he set up his visible church in his family; as is evident from Gal. iii. 17, 18. For speaking of the promise to Abraham and his seed, the apostle observes, "And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before God in Christ, the law [or Mosaic dispensation] which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise." If therefore it should be allowed, that what is here termed the old covenant, made with the Israelites at Mount Sinai, was not the covenant of grace; yet this would be no proof, that the Abrahamic covenant was not, since as has been shown, these two covenants were entirely distinct. But still it might be shown, were it necessary, that even the Mosaic dispensation or Sinai covenant, did contain the covenant of grace, obscurely revealed by types and emblems which pointed to Christ, and directed the faith of the Israelites to him for salvation. Thus the numerous sacrifices, enjoined in that dispensation, pointed directly to the atonement or sacrifice of Christ, taught them their need of his blood, and that without shedding of blood there was no remission. Their ceremonial cleansings were to teach them their need of inward purity or a new heart. Thus it was the gospel or covenant of grace under types and shadows. But,

It may be enquired, Why the covenant of grace, under the Christian dispensation is called *new*, if it is essentially the same covenant, which was revealed to Abraham, and upon which the Hebrew church was built?

3dly. To this enquiry it may be answered, that the dispensation of the covenant of grace under the gospel is new and different from the former dispensations in this sense; that

it is a dispensation attended with more light and spirituality, in which the great truths of religion are more clearly revealed, and there are more copious effusions of the spirit to write the divine law on the heart. Under the former dispensation the truths of religion were but obscurely revealed, and little understood. The most of the Israelites appeared to have but little idea of their native depravity, and of the nature of true religion, or of what God required of them in his covenant. Therefore the whole nation used to enter into God's covenant, and profess religion, while few of them perhaps had any real piety. Of course being destitute of religion "they continued not in God's covenant," into which they professed to enter; but openly apostatized and fell into wickedness and idolatry. But faulting them for their breaking his covenant, God declares by his prophet in the words, quoted by the apostle, that it should not be so under the new and better covenant or dispensation which was coming; but that he would put his laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts—would be to them a God, and that all should know him from the least to the greatest. Thus the words are evidently a prophecy concerning the gospel dispensation, showing, that it would be new and different in many respects from the Jewish—that it would be more spiritual, and God's law would be more written in the hearts of his professing people, and that the time would come under that dispensation, when all should know the Lord; as we expect will be the case in the Millennium. But it is manifest, that this prophecy or declaration has never yet been fully verified. The covenant of grace then under the gospel dispensation is new in much the same sense, that the command of our Saviour was, when he said, "A new command give I unto you, that ye love one another." None can with truth affirm, that this command was never revealed before. For it was expressly enjoined by God upon his ancient church. For the sum of the second table of the moral law, given by Moses, as explained by our Saviour, was "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This command then, "Ye shall love one another" was *new* in this sense, that it was now more clearly and plainly enjoined than before. So the covenant of grace under the gospel may be called a *new* and *better* covenant; because it is a much more clear and full dispensation of the great truths of religion, and is attended with more spirituality. And these rites and ceremonies, which were blended with the Mosaic dispensation of the covenant of grace, and which did but obscurely teach the

truths of the gospel, did indeed wax old, and vanish away before the clearer light of the Christian dispensation. But still it is no proof, that the Hebrew church was not the same as the Christian, because it was divine truth in a more obscure manner, as has been already shown. As well might we conclude, that a man is not the same person, he was when a child ; because he is now governed and instructed in a different manner from what he then was.

Obj. 6. The Abrahamic covenant cannot be the covenant of grace ; because God says of it, Gen. xvii. 14. " My covenant shall be in your flesh." But the covenant of grace, it is concluded, cannot be in the flesh.

Ans. All allow, that the Abrahamic covenant promised the land of Canaan, and various other blessings. But none can rationally suppose that the land of Canaan, and these other blessings were put into the flesh of a child, when he was circumcised ; and that the covenant was thus literally in their flesh ? This would be quite as absurd as to suppose with the Papists, that we literally eat the flesh or body of Christ, when partaking of the Lord's supper ; because he said in the institution, " Take, eat, this is my body." But if the covenant could not be literally in their flesh, what can be the meaning of the passage ? It is clearly explained in but the second preceding verse. " Ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the token of the covenant betwixt me and you." Here we are taught that circumcision is the token of the covenant. When therefore it is said, that the covenant " shall be in your flesh" it evidently means that circumcision *the token of the covenant* should be in their flesh. And since the passage is thus clearly explained in a preceding verse, it is strange that any could ever think of understanding it literally, or could imagine, that it afforded any evidence, that the Abrahamic covenant was not the covenant of grace. How can it be any evidence, that this was not the covenant of grace, because the token of it was in the flesh ?

The Baptists themselves suppose, that baptism is a token of faith ; and thus it is a token of the covenant of grace, or of an assent to it. Baptism then is now a token of God's covenant on the flesh, as circumcision was a token of it in the flesh. No reason therefore can be given, why the one may not be a token of the covenant of grace, as well as the other.

But it is objected by some of the baptists, that the covenant of grace is something internal or spiritual, and therefore there can be no external token of it.

In answer to this it may be observed, that by the token of a covenant is meant some token or sign, by which we visibly give our assent to it. And surely God can appoint a token or sign, which may be a visible token of our faith, or assent to the covenant of grace. And if so, there may be a visible or external token of this covenant. Yea, the Baptists themselves must allow, that a profession and baptism in adults are visible signs or tokens of faith or grace in the heart, and so of something internal and spiritual. And whatever is a token of faith is in fact a token of an assent to the covenant of grace. Therefore the objection, that there can be no visible token of the covenant of grace, is evidently without any foundation.

What has been said also shows the absurdity of calling the Abrahamic covenant a fleshly covenant, as many of the Baptists do; because circumcision the token of it was *in* the flesh. We may with just as much propriety call the covenant of grace under the Christian dispensation a fleshly covenant, because baptism is now a token *on* the flesh. Or we may as well call any covenant, a waxen covenant, because the seal of it is impressed upon wax.

OBJ. 7th. Real religion was not required in God's covenant with his ancient church or as the condition of their being his church or people, as it is of the Christian church; because God called them his people, at times, when they were very degenerate and corrupt, and but very few among them had any real religion. But it is concluded, that he could not consistently do this, had real holiness been required in the covenant or constitution of that church.

ANS. The Lord Jesus in his epistles to the seven churches of Asia, addresses them as his churches, although some of them were very corrupt, and tolerated idolatry, fornication, and other gross vices. When he addressed the most corrupt of them, and reprov'd and threatened them, still he called them his churches as much as he did the most pure of them. Thus he addressed the church of Sardis as being his church, altho' he told them, that they had a name to live, but were dead; and that there were but few of them, who were not defiled; representing, that they were generally destitute of real religion or spiritual life. The Laodicean church is represented still more degenerate—as being spiritually poor, wretched, miserable, blind and naked, which must certainly imply, that they were generally in a state of sin. Yet they were addressed as being a church of Christ, as much as any one of the

seven. We might therefore as well argue from this, that real religion is not now required by Christ, as a term of membership in his church ; as we can, that it was not required in God's ancient church, because God called them his people, when generally corrupt. Christ might consistently address these churches as being *his*, although corrupt ; because they professed to be *his*. So the Jews might consistently be called God's church or people, as they professed to be *his*, although generally corrupt and destitute of religion. When they grew degenerate, God was continually reprov- ing and threatening them by his prophets, and chastising them with judgments for several hundred years ; till the whole nation were finally destroyed or captivated by Nebuchadnezzar. Also when they became degenerate after their return from Babylon, God waited upon them many years, reprov- ed and warned them by John the Bap- tist, Christ, and his apostles, till at length they were broken off from his church and wretchedly destroyed. So Christ warned and threatened his churches in Asia, and waited upon them and chastised them for several hundred years. But as they grew more and more corrupt, he finally destroyed them, and removed their candlestick out of his place.

Thus God's treatment of them in many respects was very similar to his treatment of his ancient church, and so it corroborates the evidence, that they are essentially the same.

 SERMON III.

HAVING, as it is apprehended, fully proved, that the Jewish and Christian church is the same, and also obviated the most weighty and plausible objections; it is proposed,

III. To make application of the subject in proof of the duty of infant-baptism.

1st. It is abundantly evident from our subject, that the Jewish and Christian church is the same, and that believing Gentiles are grafted into the same church, or olive-tree, from which the unbelieving Jews were broken off. It is also undeniably manifest, that the Abrahamic covenant was a covenant of grace, and that circumcision, the token of this covenant, was a seal or token of the faith of believers. It is further evident, that all the members of God's ancient church were directed to circumcise their children and households, and thus to apply this token of the covenant of grace and seal of their faith to their children, as well as to themselves. If therefore the Christian church is the same with God's ancient church — is but the continuation of that church under a new dispensation; ought not the members of it now to apply the seal of their faith, or the token of the covenant of grace to their children, as the members of God's ancient church were directed to do, unless there is some command or direction to the contrary? Have they any warrant to neglect this duty, which God has once enjoined upon his church without some direction or intimation from him? But no one can pretend, that any such command or intimation can be found in the bible, directing the members of God's church not to apply the token of his covenant, or seal of their faith to their children, as he has once commanded them. What right then have they to neglect this duty, which has been once enjoined, and never revoked? A command once given by God, stands in full force, until revoked. Thus God commanded the ancient church to keep one day, in seven, as a holy sabbath. And as he has never revoked this command, it is as binding upon us, as it was upon them. Altho' the day is changed from the seventh to the first, still this does not disannul the command of keeping one

seventh part of time holy. So God also commanded his ancient church to put the token of his covenant, or of their faith upon their children, as well as upon themselves, and has never revoked this command. Therefore the command is as binding upon us, as it was upon them. Altho' this token or seal is changed from circumcision to baptism, still it no more disannuls the command to put it upon infants; than the change of the sabbath from the seventh to the first day, disannuls the command to keep one day in seven as a holy sabbath.

Had circumcision continued to be the seal or token of the faith of believers in the Christian church, as it was in the Jewish, and had the command to the apostles been, "Go, teach all nations, circumcising them in the name of the father, &c." no person could ever have suspected, that this "seal of the righteousness of faith" was not to be applied to the children of believers or professors, as it used to be before the coming of Christ. If therefore it can be shown, that there is now an ordinance in God's church under the Christian dispensation, which in its design and import answers to circumcision; the evidence will be very strong and conclusive, that it ought to be applied to children, as circumcision was; unless there is some direction to the contrary. But does not baptism in its import and design evidently answer to circumcision in God's ancient church, as has been already shown.

1st. Circumcision was a token of the covenant of grace between God, and those who applied it to themselves or children, and was a seal or token of their faith, or of their assent to this covenant. So baptism is now a seal or token of the faith of believers, and thus it is a token of the covenant of grace, of which faith is the condition. It is therefore a token of the covenant between God, and those who apply it to themselves or children, just as circumcision was in God's ancient church.

2ndly. As circumcision was a seal or token of faith and of the covenant of grace, no one without faith could have any right to it, either for himself or children. Accordingly "Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had yet being uncircumcised;" showing, he first believed, and then circumcised himself and household in token of his faith; and so that faith was the condition of circumcision. When therefore any heathen wished to be admitted to the Jewish church or ordinances, he first pro-

feised his faith in the God of Israel, before he or his family were circumcised.

So Philip told the Eunuch, that he might be baptized, if he believed with all his heart ; which shows, that faith is the condition of baptism, as it was of circumcision, and that no persons therefore have a right to baptism for themselves or children, until they first profess their faith.

3dly. Circumcision denoted the natural corruption of mankind, and the necessity of a renovation of heart : so baptism strikingly represents our natural pollution, and need of being renewed or cleansed by the washing of regeneration.

4thly. Circumcision might point to the blood of Christ, and be designed to lead the Hebrew church to feel the necessity of the shedding of blood for the remission of sin.

So baptism is now calculated to impress us with a sense of the necessity of being sprinkled with the blood of the Redeemer, that blood of sprinkling, which cleanseth from all sin, as the only ground of pardon and justification.

Finally, as circumcision was the door of admission into Christ's ancient church in the sense, that no one could become a member of it, and attended upon its ordinances, unless circumcised : so now no person can rightfully become a member of Christ's church, or partake of the Lord's Supper, unless baptized.

It is abundantly evident from these observations, that the meaning and design of circumcision and baptism are essentially the same ; and that baptism answers the same ends in the Christian church, as circumcision did in the Jewish. If therefore baptism in its import and design does thus answer to circumcision—is now the token of the faith of believers, and of the covenant of grace, as circumcision was under the Jewish dispensation ; then it is certain, that baptism does now stand instead of circumcision. Consequently it ought to be applied to children of believers or professors, as circumcision was ; since God has given no command or direction to the contrary.

Further, in that covenant, which God made with Abraham, and which constituted him the father of all that believe, God says to him Gen. xvii. 9, and 10. "Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee, in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee ; every man-child among you shall be circumcised." Here is a plain command, that the seed of Abraham after him in their generations should keep

covenant with God by applying the token of God's covenant and the seal of their faith to their natural children. But by the seed here in this covenant is meant more especially his spiritual seed. For the apostle says, "If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise," referring to the promise in this covenant that God would be a God to him and his seed after him. Since therefore believers are the seed of Abraham, respected in this covenant, it is evident that the command, "Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations," must be binding upon them. And since, as has been shown, baptism does answer to circumcision, as a token of the same covenant of grace, and has come in its stead, are not believers, *the true seed of Abraham*, as much commanded to keep God's covenant by applying the token of it to their children, as he was? For the command was as express to his seed after him in their generations, as it was to him. Accordingly when any of the heathen joined themselves to God's ancient church, and thus professedly became the seed of Abraham, they observed this command by circumcising their children.

Is there not therefore a plain command, which has never been revoked, that believers, or those who enter into God's covenant, and profess to be the seed of Abraham, should apply the token of their faith and of this covenant to their children? Do not those then, who neglect this command, neglect a plain command of God? Had circumcision continued to be the seal of the faith of believers in the Christian church, as it was in the Jewish; all must allow, that it ought to be applied to children, as it used to be. Since therefore baptism does now answer to circumcision, or stand instead of it, is it not as certain, that it ought to be applied to children; as tho' circumcision had still continued to be the seal of the believer's faith? In this view of the subject is not the proof of the duty of infant-baptism from circumcision very clear and conclusive? Yea, is it not unanswerable, unless it can be shown, either that the Abrahamic covenant was not the covenant of grace—That the Jewish church was not essentially the same as the Christian, and that believing Gentiles are not the seed of Abraham and were not grafted into the same church or olive tree, from which the unbelieving Jews were broken off; or else that baptism is not the seal or token of the believer's faith, and of the covenant of grace, as circumcision was; or else that God has directed his church not to apply the seal of their faith to their children, as he once commanded them?

Unless one of these things can be shown, the evidence in favor of infant-baptism appears conclusive and unanswerable. But that no one can do either of these, it is apprehended, must be evident to every candid mind, who attentively considers what has been suggested from the scriptures on this subject. And would our Baptists but view the subject with coolness and candor, and consider, that to invalidate this proof, it is not sufficient merely to urge a few plausible objections; but that they must fairly prove, that the Abrahamic covenant was not the covenant of grace, that believing Gentiles were not grafted into the same church, from which the unbelieving Jews were broken off, and that baptism is not the "seal of the righteousness of faith" as circumcision was; it would seem that they could not persist in denying the duty of infant-baptism. For until they can fairly prove these things, they must see, that the proof in favor of this doctrine stands firm.*

* This proof of infant-baptism, from the Abrahamic covenant, may derive additional evidence from the apostle's allegory, Gal. iv. 22, 29. Here he considers Abraham's two wives and their sons, as an allegorical representation of the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants. "Which things," says he, "are an allegory; for these are the two covenants;" the one from Mount Sinai, which is Agar or Hagar, Verse 24. By the two covenants must be meant the Abrahamic and Sinai or Mosaic covenants, of which the apostle had been, particularly, discoursing in the preceding part of this epistle.

As Sarah was first wife to Abraham; so the Abrahamic covenant was first the constitution or basis of God's ancient visible church. And as Hagar afterwards became his wife with Sarah; so the Sinai or Mosaic covenant was afterwards superadded to the Abrahamic, as the constitution of this church. But after a while, Hagar and her son were cast out. So at the death of Christ, the Mosaic dispensation was abolished, and the unbelieving Jews, who clung to this, and rejected the gospel, were cast out, like the bondmaid and her son—They were, thro' unbelief, broken off from the olive-tree, or the church of God.—And as Sarah remained alone the wife of Abraham, after the expulsion of Hagar; so, after the abolition of the Mosaic dispensation, the covenant or promise made with Abraham became again the only constitution or foundation of God's visible church.

There is, therefore, according to this allegory, the same evidence, that the Abrahamic covenant remained the foundation of the Christian church, after the abolition of the Mosaic dispensation; as that Sarah continued Abraham's wife, after that Hagar was cast out.—Thus believing Gentiles, are grafted into the same olive-tree, from which the unbelieving Jews were broken off, partake of the root and fatness of the olive-tree, or enjoy the blessings of Abraham. Therefore the apostle says, "If ye be Christ's; then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise;" And he calls Abraham the father of all, who believe.

Since therefore the Abrahamic covenant continues now to be the external constitution or foundation of the Christian church, and believers are now Abraham's seed; ought they not to apply the token of this covenant of grace, or the seal of the righteousness of faith to their children? For the

II. The view, which has now been taken of our subject, will clearly show, how weak and inconclusive many of the most plausible objections and arguments are, which are urged against infant-baptism.

OBJECTION 1ST. There is no express command for infant-baptism in the New-Testament; and therefore it ought not to be practised.

ANSWER. God has expressly commanded those, who enter into covenant with him, and thus become members of his church, to apply the token of this covenant, and of their faith to their children, and has never revoked this command. This command of God therefore stands in full force, confirmed by the practice of his ancient church for several thousand years. Consequently it was unnecessary for him to repeat this command to his church in the New-Testament. As the apostles had been educated in the Jewish church—had always seen the members of this church put the token of the covenant and of their faith upon their children, and had also seen this token applied to the children of the Heathen, who professed their faith in God, and joined his church; so they would naturally suppose, that the seal of the faith of believers was still to be applied to their children. There was therefore no need of commanding them anew to apply the seal of the covenant to the children of believers. For they would have had no idea of omitting it without some direction not to apply it. Thus when the apostles were commanded to “Go and teach all nations, baptizing them,” &c. they would naturally apply the seal of the righteousness of faith, to the children of believers,

command is, “Thou shalt keep my covenant, thou, and thy seed after thee;” and all real believers are in a peculiar manner the seed of Abraham. If then, baptism is now the seal or token of this gracious covenant; it appears, that all real christians are as much obligated to apply it to their children; as the Israelites were to circumcise theirs.—How can this argument be evaded, unless it can be shewn, either that the Abrahamic covenant is disannulled, and is not the foundation of the Christian church; or, that the command to apply the token of the covenant to children is revoked? But neither of these can be proved from the word of God.

Again. We are taught, Rom. xi. that when the Jewish nation shall be converted to Christianity, they will be again grafted “into their own olive-tree,” or be received into the same church, from which they were broken off, and then be restored to their ancient covenant relation to God. But will they not then apply the seal or token of God’s covenant to their children, as their church always did, from its first institution in the family of Abraham—and especially since the covenant with their father Abraham still remains the constitution of this church, into which they will be received. See an explanation of the scripture allegory of Sarah and Hagar by Rev. Aaron Kline.

as well as to the parents; and so would baptize both parents and children, unless they had some direction to the contrary. In this view it may be clearly seen, why an express command to baptize infants was unnecessary. It is therefore incumbent on those who deny the duty of infant-baptism, to produce some scripture, which directs, that the seal of the believer's faith shall not be applied to his children, as it used to be in God's ancient church; instead of objecting to us the want of a command. We can produce a command of God, which expressly enjoins this upon his church. The burden of proof therefore lies on them to show, that God has revoked this command, or given a contrary direction. The seal of the covenant of grace, or the token of the believer's faith, being changed from circumcision, to baptism, no more disannuls the command to apply it to children; than the change of the sabbath, from the seventh to the first day of the week, disannuls the command to keep one seventh part of time holy. And we can see no more need of an express command for infant-baptism, than for observing the first day of the week as the sabbath. If therefore the want of an express command for infant-baptism is a proof, that it ought not to be practised, then we ought not to keep the first day of the week as holy time, since there is no express command for it. Neither ought females to be admitted to the Lord's supper, since there is no precept or example for it in the New-Testament. These and many other duties, which may be clearly proved from scripture, and which many, that deny infant-baptism, allow to be duties, must be given up; if the want of an express command is a sufficient reason against a practice. These considerations clearly show that the want of an express command for infant-baptism is no proof against it. For there may be sufficient evidence for a duty, which is not expressly commanded.

Obj. 2d. There is no account or example of infant-baptism in the scriptures.

Ans. Should it be granted, that this is the case; yet it would be no proof, that infant-baptism was not practised. When God ceased from the work of the creation, he instituted the sabbath by blessing and sanctifying the seventh day. But there is no account of its being observed by any person, nor is it even mentioned in the scriptures after its institution, till the time of Moses, which was about 2,500 years. But is this any proof that the sabbath was never observed during this long period; and can we suppose, that Ench, Noah, Abraham, and the other pious patriarchs lived in the entire neglect of

this command of God ; merely because we have no account of their observing the sabbath ? There is no account, that a single member of the church in Thessalonica was ever baptized ; but is this any proof, that they were all unbaptized ? Or is it any proof, that no Israelites were circumcised from the days of Joshua till the birth of John the Baptist ; because we have no account of the circumcision of any during that period ? These considerations show, that, supposing there was no account of the baptism of any children or households on the faith of the parent or head of the family ; still this would be no proof, that none were thus baptized. When there is sufficient evidence of a divine institution, there being no account of its being practised, is no proof at all against it. The want of such an account is mere negative evidence, and therefore can have no weight against positive proof.

But further, it cannot with truth be asserted, that there is no example in the New-Testament, where baptism was administered to the children or household on account of the faith of the parent or head. For the household of Lydia were baptized with her, altho' there is no account, that any of them believed ; as is evident from the history of the transaction, recorded, Acts xvi. 14, 15. " And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us ; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me* to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there. And she constrained us." It appears from this account, that Lydia was of Thyatira, originated from that city, but now lived with her household or family in Philippi ; where she had a house, in which she lodged the apostle for some time. Whether Lydia was a widow, or had never been married, or whether her husband was not mentioned, because absent or not a believer, is immaterial. It is certain, that she had a family or household. And whether her family consisted of servants, or children, or both, is of no consequence to the argument. For the story represents, that they were baptized upon her faith, and gives not the least intimation, that any one of them believed. This exactly corresponds with the practice of God's ancient church.

* Here it may be noticed, that she says, if ye have judged me, [not my household] to be faithful or sincere in my profession, &c. Does not this intimate, that she alone professed to be faithful or pious ?

Thus when Abraham entered into covenant with God, he put circumcision, the seal of his faith upon his son and upon all the males of his household, as well as upon himself. And when any heathen became a profelyte and professed his faith in God ; the seal of the covenant was put both upon himself and household. So when the Lord opened Lydia's heart and she believed and entered into covenant with God ; she was baptized, and her household ; and thus the seal of her faith was applied to them as well as to herself. How exactly then does the practice of the apostle in this example correspond with the practice of God's ancient church, into which the believing Gentiles were grafted ?

But the Baptists, anxious to wrest away this example which lies against them, urge, that her household were all adult believers ; because it is said in the last verse of the chapter, " And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia : and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them and departed." Upon this it may be observed, that the apostles had been preaching many days in this city after the conversion of Lydia, and had made many converts ; for we find by the epistle to the Philippians, that there was a church in this city with bishops and deacons. But at length being beaten and cast into prison, they were, when released from prison, desired to depart out of the city. They therefore returned to the house of Lydia, where they had resided ; and when they had seen the brethren or converts, who would undoubtedly collect to see them before their departure, they comforted them, and departed. Now here is not the least intimation, that by these brethren were meant the household of Lydia, or that this household were all believers. It appears then, after all that can be said on the subject, that there is no evidence, that the household of Lydia were believers. Consequently their baptism stands in sacred writ, as an example in favor of the baptism of children or households on account of the faith of the parent or head. None therefore can with truth assert, that there is no example in the New-Testament, where baptism was administered to the family upon the faith of the head. There is also an account in this chapter of the baptism of the jailor and his family. It is said, that he " was baptized, and all his straightway." But there is no proof, that any of them believed but himself. For the literal translation of the Greek in the next verse is, " He rejoiced in or with all his house, he having believed in God.

It may further be noticed, that in the account of the apostles'

preaching, it is said, "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house," intimating, that there were some present besides his family. But in the account of his baptism, it is not said, "He was baptized, and all that were in his house," but "he and all his," i. e. such as belonged to him, were at his disposal, or of his own family. And does not this plainly intimate, that they were baptized upon his faith? else why are they so expressly called his? But supposing, there had been no example of the baptism of a family upon the parent's faith, still, as before shown, it would be no proof, that it was never practised.

Obj. 3d. The language of scripture is, "Repent and be baptized; believe and be baptized;" which plainly shows, that repentance and faith are the condition of baptism; and therefore it ought not to be applied to infants, who are incapable of giving any evidence of these.

Ans. Faith, as has been shown, was as much the condition of circumcision, as it is of baptism. The circumcision of Abraham therefore is declared to be a seal of the faith, which he had being yet uncircumcised, showing, that he first believed, and then circumcised himself and family in token of his faith. So Heathen proselytes were required to profess their faith in God, before they were circumcised, and admitted into the ancient church. Had circumcision therefore remained the seal of the covenant of grace in the Christian church, as it was in the Jewish; and had the command been, "Go teach all nations, circumcising them," &c. would not the apostles have addressed the uncircumcised, just as they now did the unbaptized Jews did, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" would he not have said? "Repent and be circumcised." Or had an uncircumcised eunuch asked, What hinders me to be circumcised? Must not the answer have been the same that was given by Philip, "Thou mayest, if thou believest with all thine heart." For as circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith; Peter and Philip could not have rightfully circumcised these persons without a profession of repentance or faith; and therefore must have answered them, just as they now did with respect to baptism. These considerations show, that faith was as much the condition of adult circumcision as of adult baptism.

Therefore the direction, "Repent, or believe, and be baptized," affords not the least evidence, that baptism does not answer to circumcision, and is not to be applied to infants, as

that was. Yea, the apostles did not answer these enquiries differently from what we, who practise infant-baptism, might in similar circumstances. The world in general were then unbaptized. And should an unbaptized adult, like the eunuch, ask what hinders me to be baptized? We must answer as he did, "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest." For we suppose, that no such person has a right to baptism without faith.

Obj. 4th. If baptism is a seal or token of faith, then certainly it must be improper to apply it to children or infants, who are unbelievers.

Ans. It is very evident, from what has been already said, that circumcision was as really a seal or token of faith, as baptism is; yet God expressly commanded the Hebrew church to apply this seal of the righteousness of faith to their children. When therefore any assert, that it is improper to apply the seal of the faith of believers to their infants; they in fact charge God with commanding an impropriety, and thus highly impeach his character. For it is undeniable, that he did command this seal or token of faith to be applied to infants under the ancient dispensation. Since therefore this objection lies as much against infant-circumcision, as infant-baptism, and even impeaches God with commanding what is improper in his institutions; it is manifest, that it is false, and even presumptuous.

Further, baptism according to our ideas of it is always to be a token of faith. When applied to children, it is a token of the parent's faith as much as when applied to himself. Why then is it not as proper, that the seal of his faith should be applied to his children in token of his giving them up to God; as it is, that it should be applied to himself in token of his giving up himself? And when we consider the import of infant-baptism, that it is a token of the parent's faith, a solemn renewal of his covenant—a dedication of his children to God, and binding himself to bring them up for God, it appears to be a very suitable, solemn, significant transaction.

Another similar, and very popular objection is, that baptism is an holy ordinance, and therefore it ought not to be applied to children who are unholy.

To this it may be answered, that circumcision was a token of the covenant of grace, a seal of the righteousness of faith, denoted renovation of heart, &c. and therefore was as holy an ordinance as baptism—was the same in its design and import. And since circumcision was, by divine command, to

be applied to infants, we have no right to say, that baptism, which answers to it, is too holy to be applied to them. The objection if it prove any thing, as much proves, that circumcision ought not to have been applied to infants; as it does, that baptism ought not to be applied to them since that was as holy an ordinance, as this. Therefore it is certain, that the objection is groundless. But,

2dly. In what sense is baptism a holy ordinance? If the meaning is, that it is holy in such a sense, that it ought not to be applied to any, unless they give evidence of real holiness of heart; this is the very question in dispute. Therefore to assert, that baptism is holy in this sense is a mere begging of the question. But if this is not the meaning, and it is supposed to be holy in some other sense; then its being holy will afford no evidence that it ought not to be administered to infants. Therefore,

3dly. Allowing, that baptism in a certain sense is a holy ordinance; so the children of believers are also in some sense holy. For the apostle expressly declares, concerning such, "Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." Cor. vii. 14. Why then is it improper to apply a holy ordinance to those, whom the scriptures term holy. Yea, there is reason to conclude, that they are called holy in this sense, that they are proper subjects of this ordinance.

OBJ. 5th. The baptism of infants is of no benefit or advantage.

ANS. There may be as much benefit in baptizing infants, as there was in circumcising them. The Jews might have made the same objection against circumcising their infants; that they could not see, that it would be of any advantage to them. But would this have excused them in neglecting this divine institution? Neither will it excuse us in neglecting infant-baptism; since there is sufficient evidence, that this is a duty, enjoined upon the church of God. For our being ignorant of what good purposes a divine institution may answer, is no argument against it; nor any excuse for neglecting it. Our duty is to obey the commands of God, whether we can discern the reason or benefit of them, or not. Could we therefore see no advantage in infant-baptism, yet that would be no proof at all against it. But,

2dly. The baptism of infants may answer many good purposes. Whenever an infant is baptized, the transaction is calculated to remind the whole congregation of their native depravity—that they are born in sin, and need to be sprinkled

with the blood of sprinkling, or to be cleansed by the washing of regeneration. It is also calculated to remind parents of their covenant obligations to train up their children for God, to whom they have thus publicly devoted them.

Further, parents do in this way solemnly bind themselves, and thus increase their obligations, to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And is it not advantageous to children, that their parents should be bound by the most solemn engagements and obligations to give them a religious education?

Further, as children in the ordinance of baptism are publicly given up to God, and have the seal of his covenant put upon them; so the church are under peculiar obligations to take care, that they have a Christian education, are restrained from sinful courses, and are brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And were the church and parents faithful in performing these duties towards their children, it would have a peculiar tendency to restrain them from sin, and to impress them with a sense of the importance of divine things.

Parents likewise in this way publicly manifest their faith and renew covenant with God, by putting the token of it upon their children, and so are reminded of their covenant engagements towards God.

And if parents do obey God by heartily dedicating their children to him according to his appointment, and are faithful by religious instructions and examples to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, they have at least great encouragement to hope for a divine blessing upon their children—that God, according to his declaration in Isaiah xlv. 3, will pour out his spirit upon their seed, and his blessing on their offspring. And who knows, how much God, is pleased to restrain such children from sinful courses, or how many of them he is pleased to renew out of respect to the obedience of their pious parents, and to what they have done for them in this respect; as God granted many blessings to the posterity of Abraham on account of his faith and pious obedience? None therefore can assert, that the ordinance of baptism is not, thro' a divine blessing, beneficial to children, as well as to their pious parents.

And if it is a divine institution, as has been shown, the neglect of it must be displeasing to God, and expose to his frowns.

As it is often asked, what benefit there is in baptizing chil-

children, I would ask what advantage there is in baptizing adults? The water of itself can be of no more spiritual benefit to adults than to infants. Is there any other advantage in the baptism of adults, than as it is a token of their faith, the answer of a good conscience in obeying a divine command, and as it tends to remind them of their obligations to God. And may not every parent experience all these advantages, whenever he gives up a child in this ordinance? It appears therefore, that the baptism of infants, rightly viewed, is not a mere trivial ceremony, but a very serious and important transaction, may answer many good purposes both to parents and children, and be of as much advantage, as infant-circumcision was. But even if we could discern no benefit in it, still as has been shown, that would be no proof against it.

Obj. 6th. If persons are baptized in infancy, as a token of their parent's faith, then they will have no token of their own faith, when they themselves believe, especially if they have no children to offer in baptism.

Ans. This objection is as forcible against circumcising, as baptizing infants. For those who were circumcised when infants, had no more a token of their own faith when they believed; than those have, who are now baptized in infancy. None could become members of God's ancient church, unless they were circumcised, or had the standing seal of God's covenant applied to them. If they had not received this seal in infancy, it was to be applied to them, when they made a profession of their faith. But if they had once received the seal or token of the covenant; their professing to assent to this covenant, and to ratify the dedication, made by their parents by devoting themselves to God, was considered a sufficient token of their faith without being circumcised anew. So it is with respect to baptism. None can become members of the Christian church, unless baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. But when once this seal of the covenant of grace has been administered to a person; there is no more necessity or warrant to repeat it, when the person himself believes, assents to this covenant, and ratifies the dedication made by his parents by devoting himself to God, than there was for a Jew to receive circumcision anew, when he believed. There are various other ways, in which Christians manifest or betoken their faith, as well as by dedicating themselves in baptism. They do it by a public profession, and whenever they attend upon the Lord's supper, or offer a child in baptism. Therefore persons, who have been baptized in infancy, are

under no necessity to be re-baptized, when they believe, in order to betoken their faith.

Obj. 7th. Baptism cannot stand instead of circumcision, because the latter was applied to males only, and was to be performed on the eighth day, but the former is to be administered to both sexes, and at any time: therefore we cannot argue from the one to the other.

Ans. It is abundantly evident from our subject, that the design and import of circumcision and baptism are the same; and that baptism is now the seal or token of the believer's faith, and so of the covenant of grace, as circumcision was under the Jewish dispensation. It is certain therefore, that baptism does answer to circumcision—is the seal of the same covenant, altho' there may be some circumstantial difference. Supposing a certain king had a seal or stamp, which he directed to be affixed to all deeds to render them legal. Afterwards he appointed a new seal, of a different form, and directed, that it should be applied not only to all deeds, but also to all bonds. Now in this case would there be any truth or propriety in asserting, that the *new* seal did not stand instead of the *old one*; merely because it was to be affixed to bonds, as well as deeds—was to be more extensively applied, than the old one was? Neither is there any truth or reason in asserting, that baptism, because applied to both sexes, did not come in the room of circumcision; since they are both seals of the same righteousness of faith, or of the same covenant of grace. Under the ancient dispensation, God was pleased to appoint a seal of his covenant, which was applicable to males only. But still females might be admitted into covenant with him by profession, partaking of the sacrifices, &c. But under the Christian dispensation, which is more free and extensive, and in which there is no distinction of nations and sexes, God has appointed a seal, which is applicable to both sexes. Accordingly the apostle declares, that "There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither male nor female: For ye are all one in Christ Jesus." But because baptism is thus applied to both sexes, or more extensively, than circumcision was, it no more proves, that it did not come in the room of circumcision as the seal of the righteousness of faith; than the king's *new seal* being applied to bonds as well as to deeds, proves, that it did not come instead of the *old one*.

Neither is it any proof, that baptism does not answer to circumcision, because the latter was to be performed on the eighth day, and might be done by parents, while there is no

particular day fixed for the administration of the former, and it must be administered by a minister of the gospel. If the two ordinances are of the same import, and answer the same ends in God's church under different dispensations, it is manifest, that the one stands instead of the other, notwithstanding there may be some circumstantial difference between them.

Thus the passover was to be attended on a certain day of the month and year, at a certain time of the day, viz. at evening; and it was not necessary, that any priest should be present and assist at the table, when it was eaten. But with respect to the Lord's supper, there are no particular directions, how often, or on what day, or particular time of the day it is to be attended, and it is to be administered by a gospel minister. But notwithstanding these circumstantial differences, the Lord's supper now very strikingly answers to the passover in the ancient church, and evidently stands instead of it, as has been already shown. Hence the apostle speaks of the Lord's supper in the language of the paschal feast. "For even Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, &c.

These considerations clearly evince, that such circumstantial differences between baptism and circumcision, as have been considered under this objection, afford no proof, that the one did not come instead of the other. But to support the objection, that baptism does not answer to circumcision, it is necessary to prove, that they are not both seals of the righteousness of faith, or of the covenant of grace, which it is evident none can do. For until this is done, it will be manifest that the one answers to the other, whatever circumstantial difference there may be between them.

One particular reason, why the circumcision of children, under that dispensation, was deferred till the eighth day, was the ceremonial impurity of the mother, and consequently of the child.—"If a woman have born a man-child, she shall be unclean seven days—and on the eighth day he shall be circumcised." But as this reason is not applicable under the Christian dispensation, and as there is no particular time appointed for baptism or the Lord's supper, the administration of these ordinances, is left discretionary as to the time. If convenient, children may be dedicated to God in baptism before the eighth day. But if circumstances render it inconvenient, the omission of it till after this time will not be blameable. But parents undoubtedly ought thus to dedicate their

children as soon as it may be done with safety and convenience. And all unnecessary delays are blameable.

Obj. 8th. The Jews when they believed, were baptized, altho' they had been circumcised before; and this shews, that baptism did not come in the room of circumcision, and is not a seal of the same covenant, for if it had been, there would have been no need of repeating it by baptizing those, who had been circumcised.

Ans. God, in appointing the seals of his covenant, has a perfect right to direct, how they shall be applied. When therefore he instituted a new seal of his covenant, or of the righteousness of faith; it belonged to him to say, whether it should be applied to those, who had received the old seal, or not. If he saw best, he certainly had a right to direct, that it should be applied to those who had received the old seal, when they professed their faith in Christ, and united with his church under the new dispensation. If then, as has been shown, circumcision and baptism are both seals of the same covenant of grace, or of the righteousness of faith; it would be no evidence, that the one does not answer to the other; because the circumcised Jews were baptized when they believed; even if we were unable to see the reason of this divine direction. For God had a perfect right to direct this matter as he saw fit. But,

It is argued by the Baptists, that when a new seal is instituted in human governments, it is never applied to what has been already sealed or ratified; as it would be disannulling what the government had before done. Since therefore baptism was administered to those who had received circumcision, they on this ground urge, that these ordinances cannot be seals of the same covenant.

To this it may be answered, that in human governments it would be inconvenient, when a new seal was instituted, to require the new-sealing of every thing, which had been ratified by the old seal. But doubtless there might be circumstances, in which a human government might be justified in such a requirement. And were this the case, it could not with any truth be said, that the *new seal* did not come in the room of the old one, merely because for certain reasons it might be applied to what had been already ratified by the old seal.

But further, the Most High in the management of his vast kingdom is not obligated to conform to those customs and practices, which may be convenient or expedient in human governments. The reasons which influence them may not

apply to him. We cannot therefore reason from *their* proceedings to *his*, with any degree of certainty. In appointing a new seal to his covenant, God might see reasons, why it was best it should be applied to those, who had received the old one. Consequently he had a perfect right to direct, that it should be applied to them.

In this view it is evident, that the baptism of those, who had before received circumcision, affords not the least proof, that they are not both seals or tokens of the same covenant of grace. These considerations might be a sufficient answer to the objection. But,

2dly. We may see many reasons, why it was suitable, that the circumcised Jews should be baptized, when they professed their faith in Christ. The Jewish church, which practised circumcision, and professed to be God's people, had become very corrupt—had rejected Christ the Son of God, and put him to death. When therefore Christ rose from the dead, and set up the Christian dispensation, he instituted a new seal for his church. Those who professed to believe in Jesus Christ, were to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to distinguish them from the unbelieving Jews, as well as from the Heathen; just as circumcision under the ancient dispensation was designed to distinguish the people of God from Heathen idolators. Since therefore the great body of the Jews, who practised circumcision, rejected Christ and his gospel, it appears very suitable that those of them who believed in him, should be baptized in his name, altho' they had been circumcised; that they might be distinguished from the nation in general, who were broken off from God's church by unbelief, and were enemies to the gospel of Christ. Thus whenever a believing Jew presented himself or children for baptism, it was a public manifestation of his receiving the Saviour.

Further, when the Christian dispensation was set up, and the unbelieving Jews were broken off from God's church after the death of Christ; circumcision then ceased to be the seal of the righteousness of faith, or of the covenant of grace. Those who were unbaptized therefore had not upon them the seal of the righteousness of faith, which belonged to the Christian dispensation. Was it not very suitable then, that the Jews should receive the seal of the new dispensation, when they professed to receive the Saviour? We can therefore see some reasons, why it was proper, that the believing Jews should be baptized; altho' they had before received circumcision.

which was a seal of the same covenant under the old dispensation.

Q^UEST. 9TH. Jesus Christ, who came to be our example, was baptized at adult age, therefore we ought to imitate him in this respect.

ANS. If Christ was baptized for our example, is it not as much a proof, that we must not be baptized until thirty years old, as it is that we must not, till we become adults. For John was baptizing some time, before Jesus went to him for baptism. Luke informs us in his gospel, iii. 21. that, "when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also was baptized." Christ waited till he "began to be about thirty years of age," before he went to be baptized, altho' he might have been baptized some time before. If then he was baptized as an example for us, ought we not to wait, till of the same age? For certainly we cannot expect to be qualified for this ordinance at an earlier age than our Saviour.

Further, Christ's baptism could not be of the same import and design, as the baptism of Christians. As he was perfectly holy, it could not denote repentance, renovation of heart, cleansing from sin, &c. or the need of these; as the baptism of others does. Neither is there any evidence, that John baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which is the form of Christian baptism, instituted by Christ after his resurrection. Especially we cannot suppose, that Christ was baptized in his own name. This shows that the baptism of our Saviour, was different in its nature, design and form from that which is now administered in the Christian church, and therefore we cannot determine from his example, at what age we ought to be baptized, with any degree of certainty. His baptism was evidently a public consecration or introduction to the ministry, on which he was now entering as our great high priest. It was therefore in conformity to the law of God, which instituted a similar form for consecrating the high priest to his office.

The priests under the law entered on their public service at thirty years of age; so Christ, "when he began to be about thirty years of age" was baptized and entered upon his public ministry. They were consecrated to their office by being washed with water as to their hands and feet; and by being anointed with oil, which was poured on their heads. In conformity to this law, Jesus Christ, our great high priest was publicly consecrated or introduced into his ministry by baptism, and the anointing of the Holy Ghost, which descend-

ed upon him immediately after he was baptized. For Peter speaking of Christ's preaching, says, "That word ye know, which began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached, how God *anointed* Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power." As his baptism was in conformity to the law for consecrating the priests; he therefore says to John, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Since therefore the baptism of our Saviour was different in its nature, design and form, from the baptism practised in the Christian church; there is not the least reason or propriety in supposing, that it was designed as a rule or example for us in this respect, unless we are about to undertake the same office, which he performed. To argue, that no children ought to be dedicated to God by baptism; because Christ was not consecrated by baptism to his public ministry till 30 years of age, is certainly very weak and inconclusive.

Besides, could it be proved, that Christ's baptism was the same in its nature and design, as the baptism now practised, still it would be no proof, that it ought not to be administered to infants. When circumcision was first instituted as the seal of the righteousness of faith, Abraham received it at 99 years of age. But this was no proof, that it was not to be applied to children afterwards, or that none was to be circumcised till 99 years old. So should it even be allowed, that Christ, and others who professed their faith in him, were baptized at 30 years old or at adult age, when Christian baptism was first instituted; yet this would be no proof against infant-baptism. It would afford no more argument against it, than Abraham's adult circumcision did against the circumcision of infants. It is evident therefore from various considerations, that the baptism of Christ, affords no argument or objection of any weight against infant-baptism.

Obj. 10th. The covenant of which circumcision was the seal, is abolished; and therefore baptism cannot be a seal of the same covenant.

Ans. Circumcision was a seal of the Abrahamic covenant, and that, it has been already shown, was in reality the covenant of grace. Consequently it has not been abolished; for the covenant of grace is immutable and eternal. And that the Abrahamic covenant is not disannulled is abundantly evident from the words of the apostle. For he declares that the blessings of Abraham have come upon the Gentiles thro' Jesus Christ. Since therefore believing Gentiles now enjoy the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, that God will be their

God ; it is certain, that this covenant is not abolished. It is also by this covenant, that Abraham was constituted the father of many nations, or of all them that believe, and that believing Gentiles are constituted " Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise." These considerations clearly evince, that the Abrahamic covenant is strictly " an everlasting covenant," as it is called, Gen. xvii. and that it does for substance, yet stand in full force.

Obj. 11th. If we argue baptism from circumcision, then all children in Christian countries ought to be baptized, since all the Jewish children were circumcised.

Ans. All the Jews, who circumcised their children, were professedly in covenant with God, and members of his church. By this very transaction of circumcising their children, they professedly assented to God's covenant. The argument therefore from circumcision proves, that all, who profess to enter into covenant with God, and become members of his church, are to put the seal of this covenant upon their children. This was the constitution under the Jewish dispensation ; and ought to be the practice in the Christian church. But,

2dly. It is undoubtedly true, that all children in Christian countries ought to be baptized. All parents ought immediately to repent, believe, and then comply with the covenant of grace, and put the seal of it upon their children. Every parent is very criminal in neglecting it. But none ever ought, or ever were required to profess to be in God's covenant with a wicked or impenitent heart, and thus play the hypocrite. This God has always condemned. Thus he reprov'd the Israelites for flattering him with their mouth, and lying unto him with their tongue ; while their heart was not right. And unto the wicked he said, Psalm 1. " What hast thou to do, that thou should'st take my covenant in thy mouth ?" showing that he disapproved of the wicked's professing to enter into his covenant.

Thus a right view of the Abrahamic covenant, of the Jewish church, and of the nature and design of circumcision, clearly shows, how weak and inconclusive the most plausible arguments and objections are, which are urged against infant-baptism. We have also suggested various other considerations in answer to objections, urged by the Baptists. And does not the proof, adduced from circumcision being a seal of the covenant of grace, and the Jewish church being essentially the same with the Christian, stand firm against all these objections ?

III. As we have applied our subject in proof of infant-baptism, and in showing the weakness of objections, urged against this, it may not be improper to mention some other corroborating arguments in proof of this practice, altho' they do not directly flow from our subject.

1st. The words of the apostle, Cor. vii. 14. afford an argument of considerable weight. Speaking of the case of a believer and unbeliever, connected in the marriage relation, he says, "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." As the members of the Jewish church were forbidden to marry, or to live with an idolatrous husband or wife, and as the children, when one of the parents was a Heathen or idolator, were considered as Heathen or unclean, and to be debarred from the privileges, pertaining to the children of the church; a doubt had arisen in the minds of the Corinthian Christians, whether when one of the parties in the marriage relation was converted, it was right to live in this relation with the other, who remained a Heathen or unbeliever; and whether the children were to be considered as children of the church or of the world—were to be treated as the children of the believer or unbeliever. In answer to these queries, the apostle directed the believer not to put away or leave the unbelieving correlate. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife by the husband; so that the believer may have a just right to the use and enjoyment of the unbeliever in this relation. Just as it is said in another place, "To the pure all things are pure. And every creature of God is good, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." "Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." If it had been wrong for believers to have lived in the marriage relation with their unbelieving partners, but must have put them away, as the Jews did their Heathen wives; then their children also must have been treated as unclean or the children of unbelievers. But now since the unbeliever is sanctified in relation to the believer, the children are holy—are to be considered as the children of believers. Here the apostle makes a difference between the children of believers and unbelievers; the one he calls unclean and the other holy. It is certain therefore, that the children of believers are in some sense holy. But none can rationally suppose, that they are all born with renewed or holy hearts. In what sense then are they holy? Is it not evidently in this sense, that they are consecrated to

God in baptism, and have the seal of his covenant applied to them, or that they are the proper subjects of this ordinance? Things thus consecrated to God are often called holy in the scripture. Thus the children of the Jewish church or of those who were in covenant, were called a holy seed. But the children of Heathen, or of those who were not in covenant, were considered as unclean, and might not thus be dedicated to God in circumcision. So the children of unbelievers are now termed unclean, as they are not to be consecrated to God in baptism. Is not this evidently the meaning of the apostle in this passage? And does it not therefore clearly teach, that the children of believers are now to be devoted to God in baptism, as they were to be devoted to him by circumcision under the Jewish dispensation? The opposers of infant-baptism, to evade the argument from this passage, are necessitated to assert that holy here means legitimate. But this is a sense in which the term holy is never used in any other part of scripture, and therefore is very evidently a forced, unnatural construction, merely to evade an argument, which they cannot otherwise answer. Besides, may not the children of unbelievers be legitimate, and in this sense holy, as well as children of believers? Or can we suppose, that the apostle meant to declare, that the children of all unbelievers were bastards? Do not these considerations clearly show, that the term *holy* here cannot mean the same as legitimate; as the opposers of infant-baptism would fain make us believe.

Again, under the former dispensation the children of those parents, who entered into covenant with God, or belonged to his church, were dedicated to God by having the seal of his covenant applied to them. The Jews esteemed it a great privilege to have the seal of God's covenant thus applied to their children; and even the apostle teaches, that there was much profit in circumcision. If therefore the token of the covenant had not been applied to children under the Christian dispensation, would not the Jews have cavilled and objected against the gospel on account of its thus excluding children from this privilege? They were greatly attached to their privilege, were very ready to cavil when they were abridged, and very apt to object against the gospel, when they could find any occasion. Since therefore we do not find, that they ever objected against the gospel on account of its excluding children from this privilege, there is great reason to believe, that they were not excluded, but had the seal of the righteous-

ness of faith, or of God's covenant applied to them, as it was in the Jewish church.

Further, the apostle in answering the questions, "What advantage hath a Jew? And what profit is there of circumcision?" says, "Much every way." This shows, that it was a privilege for Jewish children to be given up to God—have the seal of his covenant put upon them; and to have their parents solemnly bound to bring them up in the knowledge and service of God. If therefore the profit of circumcision in these respects was as the apostle declares, "much every way," then certainly its abolition must be a loss to children in these respects, unless there is something appointed in its room. But as the gospel dispensation is represented as more extensive and rich than the former, it affords great reason to conclude, that the advantage of circumcision is fully supplied to the children of believers by the introduction of baptism in its stead:

2dly. Omitting other arguments, which might be adduced from the word of God, it may be observed, that the proof in favor of infant-baptism is greatly confirmed by the practice of the church in the early ages of Christianity. Origen, who lived 100 years after the apostles, declares, that infant-baptism had been the constant usage of the church from the days of the apostles. He says, "That the church had an order from the apostles to give baptism to infants." He also argued from infant-baptism to prove original sin, or the natural depravity of the human heart. This shows that it was an uncontroverted practice of the church; otherwise he could not, with propriety, have used it as an argument to establish another point.

About 50 years after this, "a question was started by one Fidus, whether baptism ought not to be given to infants on the eighth day, according to the law of circumcision. This question was proposed to 66 Bishops or ministers, convened at Carthage, who unanimously resolved, that it was not necessary to defer baptism to the eighth day, but it might be given at any time before, if convenient." But none of them manifested the least doubt or scruple about the practice of infant-baptism. A large letter, containing the reasons of this resolve, was written by Cyprian, in the name of the council.

Now among such a number of ministers, doubtless there were some 60 or 70 years old, who could remember within less than 100 years of the apostles. If therefore infant-baptism had been a practice, introduced since the days of the apostles, some of them must have known it. And if so, is it

not strange, that none of them should intimate any scruple about it ?

About 100 years after this time Ambrose declared, " that the baptism of infants had been the practice of the apostles, and of the church till that time."

Austin, about 300 years after the apostles, had a controversy with one Pelagius about original sin. To prove this, Austin frequently urges infant-baptism, demanding, why infants are baptized for the remission of sin, if they have none ? And altho' Pelagius appeared greatly puzzled with the argument, yet he did not pretend to deny the duty or practice of infant-baptism. Now Pelagius was a man of great learning and information, and had been personally acquainted with the most noted churches in Europe, Asia, and Africa. And had infant-baptism been a departure from the apostolic practice, he must have had some intimation of it. And had he known it, he doubtless would have mentioned it to relieve himself from the argument from infant-baptism, with which he was so embarrassed. This affords a strong argument, that infant-baptism has been the practice of the church from the days of the apostles. For had the whole Christian church throughout Asia, Africa and Europe, departed from the apostolic practice, such a public matter must have been generally known. And if so Pelagius would not have failed to mention it to obviate Austin's arguments from infant-baptism.

There is no account of any church in all the Christian world, that ever denied or spoke against infant-baptism for 1100 years after Christ. In 1130 there appeared a small number in France, who denied the possibility of the salvation of infants ; and consequently their right to baptism. But this sect soon disappeared. Excepting these there is no account of any church, that held at all to water baptism, which denied the baptism of infants till about the year 1520. Then the present sect of Anabaptists took their rise in Germany ; whence they have spread into various parts of Europe and America.

Now the Christian religion, in the days of the apostles, was propagated into many distant countries, and churches were established in Europe, Asia, and Africa, in different kingdoms and nations, several thousand miles distant from each other. But if these churches had been every where established upon the plan of adult-baptism only, and no children had been baptized ; how could infant-baptism become so universally prevalent thro' all the Christian world, among different nations,

and in churches thousands of miles distant, in the course of a 100 years from the apostles? How could such a speedy and great alteration take place in a matter of such public notoriety, and great importance, and yet no noise be made about it; no opposition raised against it? It is most irrational to suppose it. For there is a very particular history of the religious doctrines, rites, disputes and divisions of the Christian church in the early ages of Christianity. And when any new religious sentiments or practices were introduced, it used to occasion great disputes and divisions. And there is generally an account, when, and by whom, they were introduced, and who opposed them. But there is no account of any such contention or division about infant-baptism. Neither can any person tell, when or by whom, it was introduced, if not by the apostles. But can we rationally suppose, that a matter of such importance and notoriety as infant-baptism could, directly contrary to the practice of the apostles and all the churches which they had established, be so early introduced into all the Christian churches without any opposition or contention, and no one be able to know, when or by whom, it was introduced? The supposition is very unreasonable. These considerations afford an argument of great weight, that infant-baptism was an apostolic practice; and thus they greatly corroborate the proof in favor of it, which has been adduced from the scriptures.

To invalidate this argument, it is urged, that Christians, in the early ages of Christianity, appeared to have wrong ideas of the nature and design of baptism; and that if they mistook in this respect, they might also with respect to those, who were the proper subjects of baptism.

In answer to this it may be observed, that there are many persons in all Christian churches even at the present day, who are very far from having correct, just ideas of the nature and design of the ordinances and institutions of the gospel. Persons are very liable to mistake in their opinions concerning the nature and design of these ordinances. But whether the apostles baptized infants or not, was a plain matter of fact, in which it was impossible for Christians who then lived, to mistake. They could not but know, whether the apostles baptized children, or not. And if they did not baptize them; then they must have known, when infant-baptism was first introduced, that it was an innovation, and contrary to the apostolic practice. Allowing then, that Christians in the early ages of Christianity, might have some wrong ideas of the na-

ture and design of baptism ; yet this will not at all invalidate their testimony to a plain matter of fact ; when they declare, that infant-baptism was practised by the apostles, and had been the practice of the Christian churches ever since.

But it is further urged that infant-communion and other gross errors, as well as infant-baptism, were early admitted into the Christian church.

Ans. Infant-baptism was universally prevalent in all the Christian churches, before we have any account of these errors. Altho' infant-communion might be practised in some churches ; yet I know of no account, that it ever was an universal practice in all the Christian churches. Neither is it asserted by writers in those early times, that it was the practice of the church from the days of the apostles, as baptism was. And so with respect to the other gross errors, they generally occasioned much dispute and contention when introduced—did not prevail so early as infant baptism must have done—and were never so universally prevalent in all parts of the Christian world.

“ The different sects of Christians were often inflamed against each other by very small differences. It is therefore utterly unaccountable, that there should be no dispute, when this supposed fundamental error of infant-baptism was introduced ; nor the least remains of any controversy about it until within these two or three hundred years.”*

Now what is there to counterbalance all this evidence, which has been exhibited in favor of infant-baptism ? There is no direct, positive evidence against it ; for none pretend, that there are any commands or prohibitions against it. The arguments urged against it, are merely negative, such as the want of a command or example for it—the direction to repent, believe, and be baptized—that it can do no good, and such other objections, as have been considered, and which as already shown, may be easily obviated. It appears, that there is direct and positive evidence in favor of infant-baptism, but no positive proof against it ; and that the most plausible objections against it arise from mistaken ideas of the Abrahamic covenant, or of the nature and design of baptism. If these things are attentively and candidly considered, will not the evidence in favor of infant-baptism appear conclusive and satisfactory to every unprejudiced mind ? For since there is direct and positive evidence in favor of it, and no positive evi-

* *Doct. Lathrop's sermons on infant-baptism.*

dence against it ; is it not unreasonable to deny the duty of infant-baptism ? It is acting against evidence.

Is it not strange that any can be so opposed to publicly consecrating their children to God by putting the seal of his covenant, and of their faith upon them ; as Christ's ancient church were commanded to do ? Was it not a privilege, that pious parents under the former dispensation might thus dedicate their dear children to God ; and entertain a hope, that the same divine blessings would descend on them, as on their own souls ? Thus Christ, as to his human nature, " was consecrated to God ; and according to the law, he was brought to the temple, to be presented to the Lord. And strange it is, that all pious parents do not even long to make the same visible consecration of their children to the Lord at this day !"*

IV. It appears, that the denial of infant-baptism has a tendency to lead into other hurtful errors. It leads persons to suppose, that the Abrahamic covenant was not the covenant of grace, requiring faith as its condition, but a mere temporal, external affair ; and that therefore circumcision the token of it was not a seal of the faith of believers as the apostle declares—that the Hebrew church was not the real visible church of God, but merely a type of it—that God did not in his covenant with that church require faith and a right heart or real religion, as the condition of the promised blessings, but merely external obedience, and promised them nothing but worldly, temporal blessings upon their compliance—that persons might enter into God's covenant, fulfil all its requirements, be entitled to all its blessings and so become members of God's ancient church according to his appointment, while impenitent and enemies to him—that the Jewish church was essentially different from the Christian, and therefore the believing Gentiles were not grafted into the same church or olive-tree, from which the unbelieving Jews were broken off, as the apostle represents. These are generally, if not universally, the sentiments of our Baptist brethren, which shows, that the denial of infant-baptism leads to these errors. But how contrary these ideas are to the many plain express declarations of God's word, is manifest from what has been advanced on this subject. And these their ideas of the Abrahamic covenant, of the Hebrew church and dispensation, as being merely external, ceremonial, and temporal, naturally tends to sink the Old Testament in

* *A Sermon by the Rev. JACOB CATLIN.*

their view, and to lead them to consider it as of little use or importance to us, who are under a dispensation so entirely different from the old one. Hence it is, that there are so many among those that reject infant-baptism, who treat the Old Testament so lightly, calling it but a type and shadow, denying it to be any rule to us, and asserting, that it is of but little use to Christians. But this certainly is casting contempt upon the word of God, and is considering all the instructions, which Christ communicated to his church for four thousand years as of little consequence.

But how differently did our Saviour and his apostles treat the sacred scriptures of the Old-Testament? They treated them with the greatest regard and reverence, and were often quoting from them to prove the doctrines they taught.—Christ declared, that if persons will not hear, and be brought to repentance by the writings of Moses and the prophets; “neither will they be persuaded, tho’ one rose from the dead.” And the apostle declares, that “All scripture, [by which he meant more especially the Old-Testament, the New being at that time but partly written] is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, instruction,” &c. How erroneous and hurtful then the ideas of those, who make so light of the Old-Testament dispensation?

Further, their mode of reasoning against infant-baptism, and their ideas of the Old Testament tend to lead them to deny our obligations to keep the Christian sabbath, or even any sabbath at all, as holy time. One of their objections against infant-baptism is, that it is not expressly enjoined in the New-Testament. This is also the case with respect to the observance of the Christian sabbath or the first day of the week. The proof in both cases is very similar.

Hence it is, that numbers of the Baptists are Sabbatarians, or hold to the observance of the seventh, instead of the first day of the week. And others of them, who are not professedly Sabbatarians, when reminded, that the evidence in favor of infant-baptism, is similar to that in favor of the Christian sabbath, assert; that we are not expressly bound by God’s word to keep the first day of the week as holy time, tho’ it may be well to do it. Others go still further, and assert, that as the Jewish dispensation and sabbath are done away, and there is no sabbath expressly instituted in the New-Testament; so we are not obligated to keep one day holy more than another. For all days are alike. And their reasoning against infant-baptism has a direct tendency to lead them into such sentiments.

But how dangerous and hurtful these errors are, and of what pernicious effects they would be productive, if generally prevalent; the most of you are doubtless sensible. The prevalence of these sentiments would greatly tend to encourage the neglect of a religious observance of the sabbath, which is the principal means of maintaining the knowledge and practice of religion among mankind, and which was instituted before the fall of man. Since therefore a denial of infant-baptism has a tendency to lead into such hurtful errors, though doubtless many of our Baptist brethren do not embrace all these erroneous sentiments; it affords an additional reason to conclude, that it is an error. For the tendency of one error is to lead into another.*

Another consequence, which will follow from the sentiments of those, who deny infant-baptism, is, that Christ has had no visible church in the world for upwards of 1000 years, since the commencement of the Christian dispensation. They hold, that infant-baptism is no baptism, and that without baptism there can be no visible church of Christ. Since therefore it is certain from history, that infant-baptism was practised in all Christian churches for more than a 1000 years; it follows,

** Since the publishing of the first edition, I am much more convinced of the hurtful tendency of the denial of infant baptism, in the particular now mentioned. I find by observation and information, that these erroneous sentiments appear to be gaining ground among the Baptists in our country, and are already considerably prevalent. Many of them deny the sanctity of the sabbath, or their obligation to observe any part of time as holy; and are becoming neglectful of the Lord's day. Numbers of them reject the Old Testament altogether, as being wholly out of date, and no part of it now binding upon mankind. Hence many of them think very light of sabbath breaking, and oppose all laws against this, as oppression, and an infringement upon the rights of conscience. From their disregard to the Old Testament, they have embraced the sentiment both in theory and practice, that it is of very little consequence whether civil magistrates are fearers of God, and friends to his cause, or are open infidels and irreligious characters. And one of their preachers, in his writings lately published, and in high repute among the Baptists of New-England, very plainly manifests his preference of infidels to religious persons for civil rulers.† By their sentiments and practice in these particulars, they are greatly injuring the cause of religion, and encouraging wickedness and infidelity.*

† See Leland's blow at root, and stroke at branch.

that Christ had no visible church in the world during that period. And if there were no visible churches, then there were no visible ministers of Christ. What then became of the promise of our Saviour to his church and ministers during this period, that the gates of hell should not prevail against it, and that he would be with them always unto the end of the world? Could this be fulfilled if there were no visible ministers or churches of Christ? Or can we suppose, that he would have no visible church in the world for so long a period?

V. In reflecting upon the subject, a number of important considerations naturally suggest themselves to our minds.

1st. Since baptism like circumcision is a seal or token of faith, and so of the covenant of grace, it is evident, that none can properly or acceptably consecrate their children to God in this ordinance without faith or real religion. They must have the faith of Abraham, in order to apply to themselves or children, in an acceptable manner, the seal of the righteousness of faith. When therefore persons apply the token of God's covenant to their children by dedicating them in baptism, and thus profess to assent to his covenant, while impenitent; they are guilty of a hypocritical profession, and of greatly profaning this divine and solemn ordinance. Such a profanation of baptism is more likely to draw down a curse than a blessing.

2dly. When parents consecrate their children to God in baptism, they solemnly bind themselves to endeavor to train them up for God's service and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The whole church also are obligated to take care, that their parents thus do their duty, and that the children have a Christian education and are instructed in divine things. When therefore such parents are not careful to restrain their children from sinful courses—to warn and instruct them in divine things, and thus endeavor to bring them up for God; they violate their solemn obligations and engagements. Their neglect brings guilt on themselves, and it is very cruel to their children, as it tends to ruin them forever.

Are not many of you, Oh parents, very negligent and guilty in this respect, that you are no more careful by pious examples, warnings and instructions to train up your children for God according to your solemn engagements, when you consecrated them to him in baptism? Are you not endangering their eternal interests by your sinful neglect, as well as bringing great guilt upon your own souls? How dread-

ful to think of being the means of destroying the immortal souls of your dear offspring by your unfaithfulness? As therefore you regard your own eternal good or that of your children, be intreated faithfully to fulfil your solemn engagements and obligations by carefully restraining them from sinful courses, and bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The church also are guilty of a criminal neglect, when they do not take care, that parents are thus faithful, and that the children have a Christian education.

3dly. Since it appears from our subject, that it is the duty of believers to apply the seal or token of their faith to their children, and thus publicly consecrate them to God, as did Abraham the father of all believers; it is evident that this is an important transaction, and a proper performance of it is useful and beneficial, whether we are able to discern the good effects of it or not. Supposing we could not be able to discern the particular benefits of it, yet this would be no proof, that it was not beneficial. But we can see, how it may be useful in several respects both to parents and children. In this transaction parents renew covenant with God, are reminded of their obligations to give up all to him, of their peculiar obligations to train up their children for him, and of the need their children stand in of divine grace or the washing of regeneration. It may be advantageous to children, as it lays their parents and the church under peculiar obligations to see, that they are brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

In this respect we can see the beneficial tendency of infant-baptism both to parents and children.

In addition to this, God can add his peculiar blessing to a proper observance of this divine ordinance, as he generally does to a right observance of his other positive institutions. He can as easily add his blessing to the practice of infant-baptism, and render it beneficial, as he can to the observance of the Lord's supper, public worship, or any other divine ordinance. For none of these institutions will be of any benefit, unless attended with a divine blessing. As there was much profit in circumcision, so there is much reason to conclude, that baptism, which now stands in its stead, is equally advantageous. Those therefore who deny or neglect the duty of publicly consecrating their children to God in baptism, cut off themselves and children from these benefits or blessings. And

not only so, but their neglect of this divine ordinance must be displeasing to God and expose them to his frowns.

VI. Before I conclude, I must express my regret in being under the disagreeable necessity of introducing this controversy into the pulpit at the present time. Altho' requested several times of late, I had determined not to preach upon the subject at present, lest it should take off your attention, my hearers, from concerns of greater importance, and hinder the revival of religion, with which God has mercifully favored us. But as the Baptists have repeatedly preached upon the subject among us, and have positively asserted, that no evidence can be produced from the bible in favor of infant-baptism, and that those who join our churches, have no evidence but tradition, or the mere assertions of their ministers; it appeared to be duty to exhibit from scripture the evidence, on which we proceed; that we might vindicate our practice from such unjust aspersions, and show the falshood of such vain boasting assertions. And now I am ready to appeal to every one, of whatever denomination who has candidly attended to what has been suggested on the subject, whether such positive assertions and charges against those, who practice infant-baptism, are not unjust; and do not favor too much of a vain self-confidence.

Finally, it becometh us all to enquire, whether we have, by a cordial faith been grafted into the good olive-tree, become interested in the covenant of grace, and thus made partakers of the blessings of Abraham. It is by faith only, that we can have a real standing in this covenant and in the church of Christ, be the seed of Abraham, "and heirs according to the promise." As God's ancient people, were "because of unbelief" broken off from their visible standing in this church, and were deprived of all its privileges and blessings; we should "be not high-minded, but fear." "For if God spared not the natural branches," he certainly will not spare us, if we remain impenitent. Without a cordial union to Christ, we shall not be benefited by his atonement—for those who believe not, are condemned already. And unless we are united to him by faith and love—are in him, as the branch is in the vine; we shall be cast forth as withered branches, and be burnt with unquenchable fire. It is therefore infinitely important to each one of us, that we be grafted into the good olive-tree, and become interested in the covenant of grace: otherwise we shall be forever excluded from the glorious blessings of the gospel.—And there will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth,

when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of heaven, and you yourselves thrust out." And those parents, who are out of Christ, or are negligent of divine things, are bringing ruin not only upon themselves, but also upon their dear children. They do not devote them to God in faith, neither do they train them up for him in the ways of piety; nor have ever once sincerely prayed God to have mercy upon them. On the contrary their impenitence, disobedience, and opposition to God, tend to draw down his displeasure upon themselves and families, and their evil examples and neglect of religion tend to lead their children with them to destruction.

Are there not a great number of you, my hearers, who are still out of Christ and have no title to the blessings of the covenant of grace? Your state, O sinners, is awfully wretched. You have nothing to shelter you from the curses of God's holy law. You hang over the pit of destruction by nothing but the slender thread of life, which is liable every moment to be cut asunder; and unless you soon become reconciled to God, and cordially embrace the Saviour, you will be undone forever. The situation of those of you, who have remained careless during this revival of religion, or who, after being awakened, have gone back again to a state of stupidity, is dreadfully dangerous. There is reason to fear, that the spirit of God is about to depart from us in its awakening influences and many of you appear by your conduct, as if you wished to provoke him to leave you. But what will become of you, should the spirit of God depart from you? If left to yourselves, you will certainly go on in your sins, treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath. How wicked and dangerous then to do any thing, which will tend to quench the strivings of the holy spirit, or to provoke him to leave you? Should this revival now cease, and should there be no more awakenings for 50 years to come, than there have been for 50 years past; would not the greater part of you, who are in a state of impenitence, die in your sins, and go down to destruction? The thought is very tremendous. However light any of you may make of these things; yet your Christian friends are trembling for your immortal souls. Have not you therefore much greater reason to fear and tremble for yourselves? You have been favored with a peculiar season—such a season, as but few generations are favored with. God has come down among you by the influences of his holy spirit—has awakened the attention of numbers, who, we hope, have set forward

towards heaven, and doubtless he has also knocked at the door of your hearts. But you have neglected his calls, resisted the stirrings of his spirit, and now God seems to be departing from you. Therefore there is great danger, that you will be left to go on in your sins, and bring upon yourselves an aggravated condemnation. For should you perish, all these calls and warnings will rise up in judgement against you, and will greatly increase your guilt and misery. For to whom much is given, of them much will be required. God may justly say to you, "Because I have called, and ye have refused—have set at nought all my counsels, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh." "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." How will it aggravate your misery, should you neglect and fall short, to remember what opportunities you have misimproved; and to consider, how your acquaintance and companions engaged in religion, and secured immortal glory and felicity; while you neglected your eternal concerns for the vain transitory pleasures, possessions, and enjoyments of this world? How cutting will be the reflection, that for these momentary enjoyments, you lost the endless joys of heaven, and plunged into remediless woe? Will not the thoughts of your folly add greatly to your wretchedness? Why then will you not be persuaded in this your day to make your peace with God, to engage in religion? For "her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace." It will afford you an unfailing source of comfort and support under all the evils and troubles of life, will support in the hour of death, and yield everlasting felicity beyond the grave. AMEN.

 AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING A

LETTER TO THE AUTHOR,

*Showing that no one particular MODE of applying water,
to the exclusion of all others, is ESSENTIAL to the
VALIDITY of CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.*

REV. SIR,

I RECEIVED a note from you, requesting me to send you my thoughts, on the mode of Baptism, that they may be published, as an appendix to your sermons. I comply. But so much has been already written on this subject, that I conceive you will not wish me to do more than is necessary to a brief view of the matter proposed.

I conceive it very important to ascertain the proper subjects of this ordinance. But to me it appears, that the mode of applying water in baptism, though not altogether indifferent, is of less consequence; and that neither sprinkling, nor immersion, is exclusively essential to the validity of the ordinance. I should therefore consider it unnecessary to publish any thing on the subject, were it not, that there are Christians, who not only conceive that the mode is essential; but who refuse communion with, and virtually excommunicate the greatest part of the church of Christ, not only on account of the subjects of baptism, but also of the mode in which they have been baptized; and hold it essential to the validity of the ordinance, that it be administered by a total immersion of the body. It therefore becomes necessary to examine the subject.

For it must be wrong to do all this, on grounds not warranted by the word of God. My design is to show from the holy scriptures, that *Immersion is not necessary to the Validity of Christian Baptism.*

I. I begin by making some observations on the meaning of the Greek word *Baptizô*, from which the word *Baptism* is derived, as it is used by Christ and his apostles. It is of little consequence to enquire how this word has been used by writers in other ages. It is sufficient, if we can find how it is always used in the New-Testament. This word is used, in its several variations, in the New-Testament, not only for the ordinance of Christian baptism, but for other ceremonial and religious washings.* Let us examine whether, in such cases, it denotes immersion. This may help to fix its meaning, when applied to the Christian ordinance. This word is used for the out pouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. "John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be *baptized*† with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence." Which took place at the time now mentioned, according to this prediction, and according to the prophecy of Joel. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, (saith God) I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." The same word is again used in the same sense by Peter, in reference to the descent of the Holy Ghost on the assembly at the house of Cornelius. "Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be *baptized* with the Holy Ghost."‡ On a careful examination, I cannot find a single instance, except where the ordinance in question is respected, in which immersion is clearly denoted by the word: but whenever it respects the use of water, it apparently signifies sprinkling, or affusion, and in some instances this is unquestionable. I will mention several instances. This word is twice used in one verse. "And when they come from the market, except they wash,|| (*baptize*) they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washings§ (*baptisms*) of cups and pots, brazen vessels and tables." Here the word denotes pouring on water,

* I cannot find that *Baptizô* is ever used in the Greek Testament to denote any Washings, but such as were esteemed of a religious nature. All other washings are expressed by *Niptô Louô*, or some other word; but never by *Baptizô*.

† *Baptisthesis*, Acts i. 5.

‡ Acts ii. 16.

|| *Baptisuntai*.

§ *Baptismos*, Mark vii. 5.

which was the custom in which the Jews washed their hands, as Elisha poured water on the hands of Elijah. And however they might wash their cups and pots, their tables were too large to be conveniently washed in any other way, and probably these washings were a kind of imitation of the purification of the vessels of the sanctuary, which was done by sprinkling.* The same word is used in the same manner, where it is said that the Pharisee marvelled, that Jesus had not first washed (*baptized*)† before meat, which the Pharisees considered as a religious rite.

The apostle, in his epistle to the Hebrews, expressly calls the Mosaic sprinklings baptisms, where he says, that that ritual “stood only in meats, and drinks, and diverse washings (*baptisms*.”)‡ Which he illustrates, by instancing the blood of bulls, and goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean—and the blood of calves, and goats, with water, with which Moses sprinkled the book, and all the people, and likewise his sprinkling with blood the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. Since therefore the word translated baptize, as used in the New-Testament, usually, and for ought I can discover, always denotes sprinkling or affusion, when it relates to the use of water, and does not respect the Christian ordinance, it is evident that when it is used for this ordinance it does not necessarily denote immersion; but may import sprinkling or pouring on. And here it is proper to observe further, that the Greek word *Baptó*, which properly signifies *to dip*, and is so used in the New-Testament,|| and is the only word that is so translated in it, is always avoided, when Christian baptism is intended.

II. Another argument against the necessity of immersion, in the administration of this ordinance, arises from the consideration, that there is neither precept, nor example for it, in the New-Testament. These have been diligently sought for, by the advocates for immersion, and with great propriety; for if these cannot be found, it must be abundantly evident

* *Levit. viii. 11.*

† *Evangelistæ, Luke xi. 38.*

‡ *Baptismos, Heb. ix. 10, &c.*

|| *John xiii. 26. and Rev. xix. 13. If BAPTIZÓ necessarily signified TO DIP, it would follow, that when the Jews come from market, “except they dip, or are immersed in water, they eat not;” and that the Pharisee marvelled that Jesus had not first dipped himself in water before meat. But no one supposes that in these instances the word has this signification.*

from this single consideration alone, that God, who so minutely described every circumstance relative to the Mosaic ceremonies, and has in this case given no particular directions, in what mode the water should be applied in baptism, does not consider it essential to the validity of the ordinance. For such directions would have been absolutely necessary, if immersion was essential. It has however been urged, that what the apostle says, Heb. x. 22. ought to be considered as having the force of a precept. "Let us draw near, with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our bodies *washed** with pure water." If this text respected the ordinance of baptism, it would not necessarily imply immersion; for bodies may be washed by sprinkling and putting water on them. Nor would it necessarily imply, that the whole body should be washed. For when a certain woman poured ointment on the head only of our Lord, he said that she came to anoint his body.† And when he washed his disciples' feet, he said to Peter, who desired not only to have his feet washed; but also his hands and his head, "He that is washed, needeth not, save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit."‡ But the words, "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water," have no respect to the ordinance of baptism. The apostle was not treating on this subject; but on sanctification: and the obvious meaning is the sanctification both of the inner and the outward man—the affections and the conduct. And it will not be pretended, that there is any other direct precept for immersion.

And as to examples, John the Baptist, or Baptizer,§ is the first recorded in the New-Testament, that ever baptized. But

* *Baptizō in its several terminations, is always used in the original, when baptism is intended. But the word here translated washed, is leloumenoi, from louo, and therefore does not mean baptized.*

† Math. iii. 16.

‡ John xiii. 10.

§ *The word Baptist in the original, is Baptistēs, and is derived immediately, not from Baptō to dip; but from Baptizo to baptize, and therefore does not signify a Dipper as some have represented; but a Baptizer. Those who say, it signifies a dipper, appeal to an old Dutch translation of the passage. But while we are in possession of the Greek original, no translation can be acknowledged as an authority.—But as the word Baptist is commonly used to denote the Antipode-English, I have in this letter conformed to general usage.*

it is no where told us, what mode he used. This is not pretended. It is only said, that from a number of expressions, it is highly probable, that it was immersion. Let these expressions and circumstances be examined.

We are informed, that "when Jesus was baptized, he came up out of *the water*." But the word translated *out of*, is often translated *from*, and might have been justly so rendered in this passage; and therefore does not prove, that he so much as stepped his feet into the water; much less that his whole body was buried in it.

Besides: Christ was an high-priest. And according to the Mosaic law, the priests were to enter on their office at thirty years of age;* and were to be consecrated to it, by being washed with water. And a brazen laver was made, and water put into it, for them to wash their hands and their feet, which is the only washing, that is particularized of them. Christ therefore waited until all the people were baptized, † that he might attain the proper age, and was then immediately baptized, not like others, for the remission of sins, for he had none; but as a consecration to his office. And this is the more evident, because it was not until that time, that he entered upon his public ministry, which thenceforth he prosecuted thro' life. And instead of being anointed with oil, as other priests were, he was publicly anointed with the Holy Ghost. It is therefore at least as reasonable to believe, that only his hands and feet were washed, as that he was totally immersed. His baptism was doubtless so far according to law, as to fulfil all righteousness in his consecration to the priests' office. Besides, the baptism of Christ, being a consecration to the priesthood, can be no certain example for us, respecting either the age or manner of baptism, unless we also would enter upon the same office.

The only reason that can be assigned from the scriptures, why John baptized *in* ‡ (or as it might be as correctly trans-

‡ Matth. iii. 16. *Apo here translated out of, is translated from Rev. xviii. 14. And the fruits that thy soul lusteth after, are departed (apo) from thee, and all the things which were daintily and goodly are departed (apo) from thee.*

* Exod. xxix. 4. and xxx. 18. † Luke iii. 21.

‡ Matth. iii. 6. *En here translated in, is often translated at. John ii. 23. Now when he was at Jerusalem (en) at the passover. Also John iv. 45. All the things that he did (en) at Jerusalem, (en) at the feast.*

lated *at*) Jordan, was because he preached there ; it being near Jerufalem, and the populous parts of the country, and therefore convenient for multitudes to attend on his ministry : But at another time, we read that he baptized in Enon, because there was much water there. This has been urged as a proof that he baptized by immersion. But if we could assign no other reason for his chusing a place of much water, we could not be warranted in asserting, that there was no other reason ; nor that this was his mode. And if people had never heard of this mode of baptizing, I do not think, that this passage would have so much as suggested the idea of immersion to their minds ; but they would have rationally concluded, that when vast numbers were flocking to hear his instructions, and were many of them under the awakening and renewing power of the Holy Spirit, and desirous to continue with him as much as possible, it was necessary that he should chuse a place, when he was in the wilderness, that was well supplied with water. It was necessary for the refreshment of his hearers, & the beasts on which they rode, with drink and other provisions ; for in those warm countries especially, the places well watered are usually most productive of food, for both man and beast. His chusing that place therefore, in a country where water is exceedingly scarce, as this passage proves it was, is of little weight, to furnish a conclusion which involves the validity of a Christian ordinance, that is no where said to depend on the mode of applying water. I cannot see that there is any evidence, that John administered baptism by immersion.

But it is again cited, in proof of immersion, that Philip and the eunuch went down both *into* the water, and came up *out of* the water, when the latter was baptized.* The words translated *into*, and *out of*, might have been as correctly translated *to*, and *from*, which is sufficient to show, that they afford no evidence that he was immersed. And the circumstances of the case were such, that it was necessary that they should go down *to*, and come up *from* the water, in order that baptism might be administered in any mode and they then go their way ; and this is all that the words prove that they

* Acts, viii. 38. *The words here translated into and out of, are eis and ek. Eis is often rendered to. So Christ directed Peter, Matt. xvii. 27. to go (eis) to the sea, and cast an hook, &c. And ek is translated from, Luke xi. 13.—She (the queen of the south) came (ek) from the utmost parts of the earth, &c.*

did. But even if they stepped into the water, there is nothing to show how Philip applied the water to the subject of baptism. But if the words rendered *into* and *out of*, *must* mean buried in the water, tho' they express no such thing, then both *must* have been buried; for certainly, according to the text, both went down alike *into*, and came up *out of* the water.

I do not know of any other examples, that our Baptist brethren bring to prove the necessity of a total immersion in baptism; unless perhaps the instance of Lydia, who was by the side of a river when she believed. But whether she was baptized, and had her household baptized at the river, or at her own door, is altogether uncertain.

And now, how inconclusive are all these examples, which are brought forward to support the necessity of immersion? The mode of applying water is not so much as mentioned, in any one of these instances, nor is any thing said, that implies, or gives us a right to conclude, that immersion was used.

But supposing that it could be made to appear probable, that John administered baptism in this mode; which is certainly without proof from the scriptures, and rests on mere conjecture; and supposing that his example were a pattern for our imitation, in the administration of Christian baptism, which is by no means evident, the result would be only this, that it is probable, that baptism should be administered by immersion. But further, if it could be even proved, that he immersed, it would not certainly follow that the baptism, which Christ instituted, after his resurrection, when all types and shadows were done away, was administered in the same mode.*

** What has been already said, shows that there is no evidence, that John baptized by immersion; but since our brethren insist much on his baptism, and profess to follow him in their mode, it may be well enough to enquire what John's baptism was; for if it was not the present Christian ordinance, it would not be sufficient to establish the mode for us, even though his mode could be made clearly manifest.*

1. *John's baptism was not an ancient Jewish rite; for there is no such institution to be seen in the Mosaic ritual. Nor did the chief priests and Levites know of any such rite, for if they had they would not have asked him, as they did why he baptized, if he were neither the Christ, nor Elias, nor yet that prophet. And when Christ asked them of the baptism of John, whence it was, had there been such an institution in their ritual, they would not have willingly betrayed their ignorance, by answering, we cannot tell.*

It was then that Christ commissioned his ministers to "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And the instances of baptism after Christ's resurrection, that stand on record, do not

2. Nor was John's baptism Christian baptism; for notwithstanding what has been said to evade the natural meaning of the sacred historian, it appears from the first part of the xix. chap. of the Acts, that John did not baptize as the apostles did. We are there informed, that Paul, finding certain disciples at Ephesus, enquired whether they had received the Holy Ghost, since they believed. "And they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." Paul answered as if amazed. What, baptized? and not heard whether there be any Holy Ghost? "Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said unto John's baptism." The matter was now cleared up, and Paul proceeded to observe, "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." The most natural construction of these words imports, that when Paul had said this, and enlightened them into the knowledge of Christ, they were baptized according to his institution.

Besides: Christ speaks of John as not belonging to the Christian dispensation, when he says that "The least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." And John says much the same of himself. "He must increase; but I must decrease." That is, His dispensation must increase; mine decrease, which could not have been true if John was a Christian minister. And the consideration, that John did no miracles, is another evidence that his was not the Christian dispensation, which like that of Moses, required to be introduced with the seal of miracles.

Those who contend that John was a minister of the Christian dispensation, endeavour to support this opinion, from what is said in the first chapter of Mark, which begins with these words, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God;" and immediately mentions the ministry of John. From this they would infer, that he belonged to the Christian dispensation. But a little attention will serve to discover, that these words are given, like a title page, to express the general subject of the book. And the little that follows concerning John, was necessary to show the fulfilment of the scriptures, concerning the fore-runner of Christ, and to give an intelligible account of our Lord's baptism, whose history the evangelist had now set down to write, and therefore does not suggest the idea, that

afford the least degree of probability that immersion was practised, and some of them were so circumstanced, that it is difficult to conceive how it was possible, that it should be. The first instance was on the day of Pentecost. At nine o'clock in

John belonged to the new dispensation. To prove that John was a Christian minister, and that therefore his baptism was Christian baptism, a passage is cited in Luke xvi. 16. "The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of heaven is preached, and every man presseth into it." But this does not prove, that at that time, the old dispensation gave way to the new; for it is certain that John obeyed the old ritual, and that our Lord himself, to the day of his crucifixion, considered it in full force, and conformed to it. But the natural import of the passage appears to be this, John was a more clear instructive preacher, than any who went before him; and his ministry was attended with unusual success. This agrees with what is said in the 28th verse of the vii. chapter of this evangelist. "For I say unto you, among those that are born of women, there is not a greater than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." Mr. Calvin, and Mr. Pool's continuators, considered this passage as meaning, "that among all the prophets of the Old Testament, God raised up none greater than John; but that the least of those that should preach the gospel after Christ's resurrection, should in their doctrine be greater than he." This shows that John did not belong to the new dispensation, which is here called, by way of superior eminence, the kingdom of God.—Dr. Gill, an European Baptist writer, argues that John's baptism was the Christian baptism, because he required of such as he baptized repentance for the remission of sins, as the terms of their admission to it, and that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, on Christ; as the apostles required repentance and faith of those whom they baptized. Doubtless John preached true spiritual religion; and so did Moses and the prophets. They preached repentance and remission of sins. And Moses required that the people should believe on Christ—the prophet whom God would raise up unto them from among their brethren. And the same gospel was preached unto Abraham. Repentance and remission of sins, were also signified by the Mosaic sprinklings, and purifications, and Christ was shadowed out by every sacrifice. And the Jews were required to attend them, with such spiritual exercises, as the terms of their acceptance, with God. Therefore these Mosaic sprinklings, even if the apostle calls baptism, may as well be called Christian baptism, as John's, as he required no more of those whom he admitted, than Moses did in the

the morning the apostles were preaching, and some of the Jews were hearing with solemnity, and others cavilling, which must probably have taken up the time till about noon. And yet, after this, three thousand made profession of their faith, and were baptized.—This was at the rate of no less than eight persons to a minute, during the whole afternoon. It is difficult to believe that all these were immersed, because there is no account that they were; and because it is difficult to conceive how they could find water for this mode. The baths at the temple, if they were suitable for the business, could not be obtained on this feast of the Jews: they were wanted by the

covenant that he administered to the people. It therefore remains evident, notwithstanding all these objections, that John did not administer the Christian baptism.

3. *The baptism of John was a rite peculiar to that great occasion, and designed to purify the people for the coming of the Messiah—This is agreeable to the account that John gave of himself to the priests and levites, who were sent to ask him, who he was? John i. 19, &c. He told them that he was not the Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet; but the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord. They then asked why he baptized? His answer implies, that it was to sanctify the people for the coming of one far greater than himself. "I baptize with water, but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is, who coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose." The Jews expected the Messiah, and needed no miracles to prove that he was coming: and could at once see, that it was suitable that his way should be prepared by a universal purification of the people. They were accustomed to purifications on their religious occasions, and special solemnities, as at the passover, pentecost, the day of atonement, at their free-will offerings, and the people were sanctified at Sinai, and on all great religious occasions. And when they found the design of his baptism was to prepare the people for the coming of Christ, nothing appears but that it was satisfactory. Though indeed there arose a question, between some of John's disciples and the Jews, about purifying; which, by the way, shows that on both sides it was considered as a purifying rite, and not a gospel seal. In this view the ministry of John and his baptism appear to be an exact accomplishment of that, which was foretold of him by the prophets Esaias and Malachi. Isaias xl. 3. and Malachi, iv. 5. And this is the account that he gives of himself. On the whole, it appears that his baptism was not an ancient Jewish rite, nor the gospel baptism, but a matter peculiar to that extraordinary occasion.*

priests. And besides, the priests would have been little disposed to have lent them to the apostles, to be put to what they would have considered an unhallowed use, in honor of one whom they had just executed as a blasphemer. And it is equally difficult to conceive, how so many could have been immersed with decency, in so short a time, if each of the eleven apostles had left the business of preaching, and instruction, and could have found a convenient place of water; and suitable changes of raiment could have been obtained. The account is apparently inconsistent with this mode.—Besides, we never, after the ascension of Christ, read of any difficulty in obtaining water for the purpose of baptism, or of going out to any bath, stream or fountain; but the natural import of the accounts are, that whenever people believed, and professed their belief, they were baptized; whether at Jerusalem, or at the house of Cornelius, of Judas or of the jailor. And in the instances last mentioned, it appears very improbable, that immersion was practised. In the instance at the house of Cornelius, Peter said, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized.”* This manner of expression suggests, rather the bringing water for baptizing them in the house, than their going abroad to some river or fountain for the purpose. And the instance of Saul’s baptism, at the house of Judas, is still more inconsistent with the supposition that he was immersed. As soon as Ananias addressed him, “Immediately there fell from his eyes, as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith, and arose,” all weak as he was with his distress of mind, and fasting three days, “and was baptized, and when he had received meat, he was strengthened.”† And when the jailor was baptized, it was midnight, and Paul and Silas were sore with the stripes which they had received from the magistrates of Philippi; and yet, at this hour, and in this condition, he took Paul and Silas, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his straightway.‡ And the answer given to the sergeants, and sent to the magistrates the next day, shows that they had not departed from the prison, for there would have been no propriety in sending to them, to fetch them out of prison, if they could have replied, You have once been out and returned voluntarily again.

If now we examine all the examples of baptism recorded in the New-Testament, we can find none inconsistent with sprinkling, but many, that certainly appear inconsistent with immer-

* Acts, x. 47.

† Acts, ix. 18.

‡ Acts, xvi. 25, &c.

sion : and the least that can be reasonably said, must be, that there is greater reason to believe that the apostles baptized by sprinkling, than immersion. Is it not therefore a little extraordinary that our brethren should, with much confidence assert, that immersion is expressly pointed out in the scriptures, and cite passages for proof, in which neither the mode, nor any circumstance which necessarily determines it, is mentioned ?

III. If we were to judge of the mode of baptism, by the things signified by it ; which indeed is but an arbitrary way of judging, for baptism is not designed to show the mode of the Spirit's operation, but the effects produced ; yet even this, which our brethren frequently urge, will not decide that immersion is the only valid mode. Regeneration is one thing signified by baptism ; and this is wrought, not by an immersion of the subjects of it into the Holy Ghost, but is expressed, by *pouring it out* upon them. And hence God says, " I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh."* Baptism signifies sanctification. And therefore God says, " I will *sprinkle* clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean," † It may also denote pardon and justification, which the apostle expresses by "*The sprinkling of the blood of Christ.*" ‡ This also, as well as circumcision, signifies death unto sin. And hence we read, that the saints, " Are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ : buried with him in baptism." § So that, even in this arbitrary and uncertain way of determining the mode, sprinkling and pouring are at least as strongly indicated, as immersion.

IV. That immersion is not the only valid mode of admini-

* Joel, ii. 28. † Ezek. xxxvi. 25. ‡ 1 Pet. i. 2.

§ Col. ii. 12. *Circumcision is no more emblematical of death than sprinkling is, and both evidently, in this place, respect regeneration, which is made without hands, and consists in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, and being quickened and raised thro' the faith of the operation of God, to newness of life, even as Christ arose from the dead, with a spiritual body. And no one can consistently suppose that circumcision or baptism is here intended, unless they believe that these external rites are regeneration itself : and therefore regeneration is the burial here intended. Besides, on the supposition that baptism is instituted to commemorate the death of Christ, it will follow, that it has precisely the same signification as the Lord's Supper ; and there is no ordinance left to represent the work of the Spirit, which is contrary both to the tenor of the Scriptures, and also to the writings of our baptist brethren on this subject.*

istering this ordinance, since it is no where enjoined, or even mentioned in the scriptures, may with propriety be argued from the inconveniency of it. Were there a positive command respecting the mode, as there was respecting all the circumstances of the ancient Jewish rites, no argument concerning its inconveniency would have any weight ; but where the mode is undetermined in the scriptures, and believers in whatever country, season, and state of health, are the subjects of it, by express command, this argument appears to me reasonable, weighty, and conclusive. Immersion is on all occasions inconvenient, and especially in cold seasons, in our northern countries. It is impossible in cases of sickness, and on many other occasions highly dangerous. And in some countries and seasons it would be to all the subjects of it, a greater suffering, than circumcision was to the Jews. We have therefore no right to conclude, without some evidence, that Christ, who instituted baptism for all believers, in whatever circumstances, intended that it should be administered by immersion, much less that he limited it to this mode. Affusion or sprinkling, and that only, can be administered in every case, and at all seasons, where this ordinance is directed.

V. It is also an objection of some weight against immersion, that it is found too inconvenient to be generally administered in the sanctuary, where all the ordinances of Christ ought to be ordinarily attended. I am aware that it will be said, that we have no account, that the apostles ever baptized in any house designed for public worship. But a sufficient reason may be assigned : they had none : and so baptized in private houses, and in the open air, as occasions required. In the same manner, Noah, Abraham, and the ancient Patriarchs offered to God acceptable sacrifices, wherever it was convenient, and the Jews were directed to eat the passover at their own houses, until a sanctuary was built. But when this was built, God expressly commanded, that no sacrifice should be offered, but at the sanctuary, and no passover eaten, but at Jerusalem, the holy city. And all Israel, on such occasions, were required to go up with their sacrifices to that one place. Circumcision, (doubtless because it was impossible to bring their feeble babe from all parts to the temple) was the only ordinance, that they were permitted to attend in their own houses. This I conceive is a sufficient indication, that it is the will of God, that in ordinary cases, where the church can have the privilege of a sanctuary, his ordinances should be attended in his house : and therefore no mode of baptism ought to be used, which is too inconvenient to be commonly admin-

istered in the sanctuary,* The only feasible way that remains, is by sprinkling, or pouring on water. † And that this last is the proper mode, is I think evident from what has been already said, and is corroborated by the consideration, that baptism is the seal of the covenant of grace, and in sprinkling it is, and ought always to be applied, as God's seal upon the forehead, the place where we are expressly told, that God affixes his seal. “ And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God : And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth, and the sea ; saying, hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.” ‡

Thus Sir, I have showed that the word translated baptism, when the ordinance in question is not intended, never decidedly means immersion ; but usually if not always affusion when water is concerned—that the apostle expressly calls the Mosaic sprinklings baptisms—that the scriptures afford no precept or example for immersion, but many examples that appear inconsistent with it—that if we were to judge of the mode of baptism, by the things signified by it, even this would not decide in favor of immersion—that immersion cannot be administered to all believers, in all cases and seasons, as the directions concerning baptism expressly require—and that it is found too inconvenient to be usually attended in the house of God, where all his ordinances ought to be ordinarily administered. In doing this, I have proved that immersion is not *essential* to the validity of Christian baptism : I have done more : I have proved that it is not the *proper* mode of administration ; although I do not consider the mode essential to its validity ; but am persuaded that any decent mode of applying water to the body, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is valid. And I heartily lament, that there are any Christians, and Christian churches, for such I esteem many of our baptist brethren to be, who on this account, withdraw communion from, and virtually excommunicate so many of the Churches, whom Christ evidently owns, by the outpouring of his Spirit upon them.

I am, &c.

JONATHAN MILLER.

West-Britain, January 1, 1800.

* I am aware, that some Baptist churches have fountains, and baptize in their houses of public worship ; but this is found too inconvenient for general practice.

‡ Rev. 7, 2, &c.



